

RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY: NURTURING KOREAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S
RELATIONAL EXPERIENCES TOWARD LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

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In Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Philosophy

by
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CLAREMONT
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ABSTRACT

Relational Pedagogy: Nurturing Korean-American women's relational experiences toward leadership.

by

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This study aims at exploring and trying to transform the present reality of underrepresentation and underdevelopment of women leadership in Korean-American churches. To achieve this aim, participatory action research (PAR) was conducted with a group of Korean-American women at Sarang Korean Presbyterian Church (SKPC) in Washing D.C. area. The PAR group met on a weekly basis to attend the seven workshop sessions where I taught eleven adult women utilizing the seven relational principles that were extracted from the literature study of relational cultural theory (RCT) conversing with relationally oriented psychological, theological, and educational theories.

The post-workshop interviews with six workshop participants and the interviews with five, non-workshop participants at SKPC were conducted to strengthen the validity of the research. Both workshop sessions and interviews were videotaped, transcribed, and analyzed by a qualitative research tool, the grounded theory. Findings are further elaborated in dialogue with relevant literature and presented in terms of the process analysis and the content analysis of the workshop. The dissertation concludes by suggesting a relational pedagogy to teach Korean women for leadership and mature faith by utilizing the seven relational principles which attend both the process (relational dynamics) and contents (relational images) of teaching and learning experiences.

According to the research findings, Korean-American women are the virtual leaders of the church while viewing and exercising leadership differently in helping, serving, and loving rather than leading at the front. The real issues of their leadership is narrow relational breadth. The women do not have other self-definition than mother and wife. Their leadership remains within the boundaries of family and local church. I identified the main cause of Korean-American women's narrow relational interests in their restricted images of God, faith, and church, which are individualistic, self-serving, and lacking communal and social dimensions. The relational pedagogy contributes to Korean-American women's leadership by transforming and enlarging its narrowness to extend beyond the boundaries of local churches.

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INTRODUCTION

Nurturing relational experiences by addressing all levels of relational experiences with self, others, and God motivates and empowers Korean-American women toward leadership.

Pyung Gap Min points out the problem of women's exclusion from the leadership roles and positions in Korean immigrant churches.¹ Although addressing the underrepresentation of women pastors and elders in Korean immigrant churches is timely, the problem is more than a lack of women pastors and elders. My advocacy for women leadership in Korean-American churches aims at strengthening the participation of women at all levels of leadership including decision making, managerial function, and theological education. According to William J. Carter's functional view of leadership, all persons can be leaders based on their "gifts" which can be appropriately applied "in any given setting."² Therefore, the leadership is not all about the "rank or position" but the "gifts."³ The leadership development should be about preparing all women as potential leaders beyond the designated women leadership positions.

¹ Pyung Gap Min, "Severe Underrepresentation of Women in Church Leadership in the Korean Immigrant Community in the United States," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (June 2008): 225-41.

² William J. Carter, *Team Spirituality: A Guide for Staff and Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 23.

³ Carter, 23.

According to Min, the previous research done on the issue of underrepresentation focused on the following three factors: the influence of “Korean Confucian patriarchal traditions,”⁴ the conservative theological position of Korean-American churches such as Christian fundamentalism,⁵ the practical need of Korean male immigrants for high status lay positions such as elders and deacons in ethnic churches.⁶ Instead of focusing on those three factors, I began with Korean women's experience as the starting point. I view the Korean women's leadership underdevelopment and underrepresentation primarily as a relational problem, specifically as the problem of Korean-American women's relational impasses with self, others, and God, which hinder them from growing into more complex and broader relationships at all levels of self, others, and God.

The study utilized the participatory action research (PAR). "Sarang Korean Presbyterian Church" (SKPC) in Washington D.C. area was the study site where eleven Korean-American women met every week for seven workshop sessions with each session lasting two and a half hours to three.⁷ I also conducted the post-workshop interviews with eleven members of SKPC, six workshop participants and five non- workshop participants. Workshop sessions and interviews were videotaped, transcribed, and analyzed using the grounded theory.

⁴ Min, 225.

⁵ Ibid., 226.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The "Sarang" church is a pseudonym for the research site. The Sarang church is situated in suburb of a large city in the East. It is twenty-nine years old as of 2010 and with around one hundred Korean members.

Throughout the paper, I used "Korean-American" and "Korean" as the general terms without much distinction unless the "Korean-American" requires specific distinction. Among the total of sixteen participants, ten women are American citizens with the average length of residency in America being 25 years. Of the ten women, eight women identified themselves as "Korean-American." One identified herself as "Korean." Another woman referred herself as "a Korean who lives in America." The eight women who call themselves "Korean-American" rather than "Korean" want to indicate their sense of entitlement as the citizens or legal residents of the United States. One of the interview participants said,

even though I am full blooded Korean, I am a U.S. citizen. It isn't fair to call myself Korean when I get all the benefits from America as a citizen. So, I call myself Korean-American.

Without regard to where they live, the majority of the women consider themselves "Korean." Their strong identification as Korean relates to their lack of English skills. Only two of sixteen participants have adequate English skills. Most do not watch American TV. All except one has non-Korean friends from other ethnic groups. These women are basically the Koreans who live in America.

The following is the outline of the chapters. Chapter One presents in-depth analysis of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT), tracing its three major periods of evolution to its present form. I chose RCT as the primary window to view women's development which can be summarized as the relational, emotional and contextual development.

Chapter Two examines relationship-oriented, psychological theories such as Chodorow's theory of reproduction of mothering, Gilligan's ethic of care, Kegan's theory of evolving self, Slee's faith development theory, Rizzuto's theory of God representation, and Asian and Korean relational psychologies. Then, I compare and contrast these

theories with RCT. The analysis confirms female development as the relational, emotional and contextual development.

Chapter Three examines the major Christian symbols found in the works of seven Christian feminist theologians, Sallie McFague, Elizabeth A. Johnson, Anna-Case-Winters, Wendy Farley, Rita Nakashima Brock, Susan L. Nelson, and Wonhee Anne Joh. The focuses are the three central doctrinal categories of God, God's power, and original sin, which seem most influential in Korean women's perceiving themselves and their relationships to God and the world. After examining the seven feminists' re-envisioning of the images of God, God's power, and original sin, I provide a synthesis of the chapter by comparing and contrasting the works of seven theologians. The chapter concludes with the works of seven feminists in dialogue with RCT's central concepts such as controlling images, mutual impacts, and relationship-differentiation.

Chapter Four explores five educational paradigms of representative feminist educators, Belenky et al.'s connected teaching, Carol Lakey Hess' conversational education, bell hooks' liberatory classroom, Letty M. Russell's partnering education, and Maria Harris' teaching as the work of religious imagination. These feminist educators share common interests in genuine relationality and community as the goal of education. After examining the five educational models, I synthesize and extract the representative characteristics of feminist pedagogy, which are then discussed in light of RCT's and other psychological and theological core concepts. These feminist principles become the building blocks for the workshop and relational pedagogy.

Chapter Five explains researcher's positionality, my definition of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, and how I applied PAR to the research. The two

goals of PAR are specified: to empower women toward voice and leadership, and to develop a cultural specific Korean feminist pedagogy called the "relational pedagogy" by testing the feasibility of seven relational principles in a local Korean church. The seven relational principles are formulated based on the study of feminist relationship-oriented theorists, which are summarized in Chapters One to Four, in consultation with the theoretical underpinnings of PAR. This chapter further details the design of workshop and provides the list of problem posing questions and activities.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight engage in the analysis of the data collected from the workshops and the interviews, using the grounded theory. Chapter Six examines the group process of the seven workshop sessions by paying attention to the issues of voice and silence. In examining the process, I focus on finding the factors that contributed to the silence or lively discussion during the workshop. Chapter Seven and Eight engage in the content analysis regarding Korean women's self-images as mother, wife, leader, and child/daughter of God, as well as their images of God. The analysis reveals that the problem of Korean-American women's leadership is narrow relational breadth. Most Korean women do not have self-images other than the images of mother and wife. While Korean women are the actual leaders of the church, their leadership largely remains within the boundaries of local churches. Korean women's dominant images of church, faith, and God, which are individualistic and lack communal interests, seem to be the major factors for Korean women's lack of participation in mainstream society.

Building on the findings from the content and process analyses, Chapter Nine suggests the relational pedagogy with the seven relational principles to empower Korean-American women toward voice, power, agency, and leadership. The core of the

relational pedagogy is to help Korean women *experience* the seven relational principles, which are open safe environment, conflicts, mutual impacts, the use of life experience in the classroom, a teacher with relational sensitivity, various forms of teaching, and relational images as the contents of teaching. The relational pedagogy supports Korean women's development as relational, emotional, and contextual. To further support the women's contextual development, I urge that the broader institutional changes in local, denominational, and cultural settings must accompany the teaching through the relational pedagogy.

This study expects to draw attentions from the pastor-teachers, religious educators, and lay leaders in Korean-American churches who are interested in teaching Korean women toward active leadership and mature faith. This research does not address Korean-American women's relational experiences in terms of class, economic status, ethnic/racial status, or the power dynamics within the various levels of Korean-American church institutions. The research is unique in that there has been no researches, to my knowledge, on the issue of Korean-American women's ecclesiastical leadership from the interdisciplinary perspective with the educational emphasis, addressing the relational needs and interests of Korean-American, Christian women, which are influenced by the controlling images of Christianity and Korean Confucian culture.

CHAPTER I

WOMEN'S RELATIONAL EXPERIENCE FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Relational cultural theory (RCT) is a new paradigm to view human development with emphasis on "the centrality of relationship in people's lives."¹ RCT refuses to accept the "separate self" paradigm of human development, which has prevailed in the mainstream, Western psychological theories.² RCT advocates a relational view of human self and argues, "we all grow through and toward relationship throughout the life span."³ For RCT, relationship is the goal of human development and the means to reach the goal. RCT began as a theory and practice to represent the experience of women and has come forth gradually into its present form, over the last three decade, to address the experience of both women and men.⁴ RCT's evolution consists of three major periods, which can be titled as self-in-relation theory, relational-being theory, and relational cultural theory. Throughout the three periods, the major emphasis of relationship or connection as the goal of human development remains unchanged. However, the underlying rationales of why we need the relationship as the goal and how to achieve that goal have significantly

¹ Judith V. Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010), 22.

² Ibid., 2-3.

³ Ibid., 20.

⁴ Ibid., 23-24.

changed and elaborated. Each period is distinguishable from the others by its shifting emphasis, which are mutual empathy, the *movement* of relationship, and the *content* of relationship (relational images). Chapter One examines RCT, closely following each of the three evolutionary periods of RCT.

The First Period of RCT: A Self-in-Relation Theory

The publication of *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* in 1991 by the collaborative work of Stone Center scholars laid a foundation for the first period of RCT, which can be best characterized as the "self-in-relation" theory of female development.⁵ The self-in-relation theory challenged the dominant psychology of the separate self, which views human development as the "essential separations from others" so as to achieve "an inner sense of separated individuation."⁶ The "separation-individuation" model, according to Janet L. Surrey, one of developers of the self-in-relation theory, fails to properly reflect the experience of women.⁷ The female "self-in-relation" is so thoroughly relational that it "is organized and developed in the context of

⁵ Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 86.

⁶ Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 11.

⁷ Janet L. Surrey, "The Relational Self in Women: Clinical Implications," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 35-36.

important relationships."⁸ Judith V. Jordan and Surrey, two major contributors to the formation of self-in-relation theory, traced the origin of female relational self back to the early mother-daughter relationship.⁹ The mother- daughter relationship, which is defined as the mutually emphatic relational dynamics between the two, establishes the "basic core self structure" of women and continues to guide the growth of female "self-in-relation" for all ensuing development.¹⁰ In contrast to the growth through separation towards individuation approach, the female self-in-relation matures through a dynamic process called "relationship differentiation" in which the relational motive of the female self

leads to increasingly complex differentiated networks of relationships, both within relationships existing over time and in new connections.¹¹

Woman's growth in, through, and towards relationships never ceases in her entire life, despite the continual changes in the "complexity and breadth" of the relationships.¹²

⁸ Janet L. Surrey, "The "Self-in-Relation": A Theory of Women's Development," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 52.

⁹ Judith V. Jordan, "Empathy and the Mother-Daughter Relationship," in *Women's Growth in Connection Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 31-33. See also, Surrey, "Relational Self in Women," 36-38, and Surrey, "'Self-in-Relation'," 54-59.

¹⁰ Surrey, "Relational Self in Women," 35.

¹¹ Janet L. Surrey, "Relationship and Empowerment," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 170. For more detailed information on a "relationship differentiation," see 36, 246, and 274-75 in *Women's Growth in Connection*.

¹² Alexandra G. Kaplan, "Female or Male Psychotherapists for Women: New Formulations," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miler, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 275.

Relationship is the basic motive, means, context, and goal of the growth and development of female self-in-relation.

During the first period of RCT, empathy or mutual empathy was viewed as "the central organizing concept in women's relational experience," which needs further elaboration.¹³ First, by placing the origin of women's empathic ability in the early mother-daughter relationship, it is inferred that empathy can be taught and learned through relational practices like "modeling" or feedbacks.¹⁴ Second, according to Jordan and the others, empathy is a highly "complex" process that contains "both affective and cognitive functioning."¹⁵ The self-in-relation maintains cognitively a sense of self while affectionately being connected to others.¹⁶ At each empathic moment, there is the "paradox of separateness within connection," which can only occur with "flexible" self boundaries.¹⁷ The self-in-relation theory did not do away with the separate self model completely since maintaining the integral sense of self was still considered critical. A deep seated fear of women's identity being lost in relationships, as hinted by the avoidance of such terms as "symbiotic fusion, enmeshment, and merger,"¹⁸ seemed to

¹³ Surrey, "Self-in-Relation," 53.

¹⁴ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵ Jordan, "Empathy and the Mother-Daughter Relationship," 29.

¹⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹⁷ Judith V. Jordan, "Empathy and Self Boundaries," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 80.

¹⁸ Alexandra G. Kaplan, "Empathic Communication in the Psychotherapy Relationship," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed.

play a major role in its failure to make a clear cut departure from the separate self paradigm. Third, for human growth to occur, Jordan asserts, empathy is never unidirectional, as typically seen in "a [simple] static mirroring," but always involves both parties.¹⁹ Growth fostering empathy occurs in the "mutually empathic relationship."²⁰ Lastly, the mutually emphatic relationship leads to mutual empowerment. According to Surrey, mutually engaging each other through mutual empathy leaves "both people feeling aware of self and other and, therefore, more energized to act."²¹ The mutually emphatic relationship, according to Jean Baker Miller, a feminist psychoanalyst and the first director of the Stone Center, results in "empowerment," increased zest, "knowledge," "self worth," and "desire for more connection for all participants."²²

The Second Period of RCT: A Being-in-Relation Theory

The second period of relational cultural theory can be called being-in-relation or relational being theory. Based on the publication of *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center* (1997), the second period of RCT differs from the previous, self-in-relation theory by several distinguishable aspects. As called by an

Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 47.

¹⁹ Jordan, "Meaning of Mutuality," 89.

²⁰ Surrey, "Relationship and Empowerment," 166.

²¹ Ibid., 167.

²² Ibid.

epithet "a psychology of movement,"²³ the second period is characterized by its appreciation of the ongoing need for the *movement*, interaction, or flow in relationship. A new emphasis on movement came with an awareness that "disconnections"²⁴ and non-mutuality exist among the women of different "racial, cultural, socioeconomic, or sexual" backgrounds.²⁵ The differences often manifest themselves in the distinctive forms of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, which are sustained by the underlying dynamics of "power differentials"²⁶ and "permanent inequality."²⁷ An oppression, irrespective of its kinds, is always the "relational oppression" that obstructs "mutual relationships" and brings about "major disconnections," according to Miller and Stiver.²⁸

²³ Judith V. Jordan, "Do You Believe That the Concepts of Self and Autonomy Are Useful in Understanding Women?," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 56.

²⁴ Judith V. Jordan, ed., *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 3. Miller and Stiver explain that "disconnections occur whenever a relationship is not mutually empathic and mutually empowering." Disconnection does "not mean leaving a relationship, but rather to mean a break in connection accompanied by a sense of being cut off from the other persons[s]." Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 50.

²⁵ Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity*, 1.

²⁶ Janet L. Surrey, "What Do You Mean by Mutuality in Therapy?," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 46.

²⁷ Cynthia Garcia Coll, Robin Cook-Nobles, and Janet L. Surrey, "Building Connection through Diversity," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 185. "Permanent inequality" refers to inequality "due to characteristics that are ascribed at birth such as race, gender, class, nationality, or religion." Ibid.

²⁸ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 49.

With non-mutuality and disconnection taken as the basic assumptions of life, a possible way out of disconnections toward mutuality was found in "the movement toward mutuality,"²⁹ that is, "moving towards more mutuality or engaging in the search for mutuality."³⁰ The mutuality among women was no longer taken for granted. For growth to occur, everyone should "learn" to "move toward mutuality."³¹ The phrase "movement towards connection" was added to the previously upheld principle of "an intrinsic interest" in [connection].³² Not just relationship but "the movement of relationship" became a basic motive for the growth of relational being.³³ Mutual connection was not going to happen through a mere intrinsic interest in connection or relationship due to obstacles such as differences and ensuing conflicts. Instead, it was supposed to be acquired by cultivating the "ability"³⁴ to make the ongoing movements in relationships.

During the period, several major concepts of the self-in-relation theory underwent significant changes. First, not just relationship per se but "*participating* in growth-fostering relationships" was newly emphasized.³⁵ The participation in relationship aims

²⁹ Surrey, "What Do You Mean" 42.

³⁰ Ibid., 47.

³¹ Jean Baker Miller, "Aren't You Idealizing Women? Aren't You Idealizing Relationships?," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 28.

³² Jordan, "Clarity in Connection," 51.

³³ Miller, "Aren't You Idealizing Women?," 28.

³⁴ Miller and Stiver argue that the goal of development must be "the ability to participate actively in relationships that foster well-being of everyone involved." Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 22.

³⁵ Ibid., 22, 47.

at the "enhancement"³⁶ or "enlargement"³⁷ of the relationship, which "ironically" leads to "more enlargement and enhancement of each person" and "greater individual fulfillment."³⁸ Accordingly, "as the relationships grow so grows the individual."³⁹ The goal of development was reframed as "the increasing ability to build and enlarge mutually enhancing relationships."⁴⁰ The relational being theory re-envisioned relationship as the three way movements, which requires "not just attention to self and other"⁴¹ but the relationship itself.⁴² The new addition, "and the relationship," epitomizes this changing emphasis. In "mutually empathic joining," "each moves and is moved by the other *and by the relationship*."⁴³

Second, the concept of "authenticity" gained greater acceptance. With the new emphasis on the movement in relationship, "authenticity" was redefined as "a person's

³⁶ Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," in *Women's Growth in Diversity*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 20; Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 47, 57.

³⁷ Stephen J. Bergman, and Janet L. Surrey, "The Woman-Man Relationship: Impasses and Possibilities," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 261; Surrey, "What Do You Mean by Mutuality in Therapy?," 42, 45 ("enlarged connection"); Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 47, 49 ("the evolution of enlarging forms of relationship").

³⁸ Judith V. Jordan, "Clarity in Connection: Empathic Knowing, Desire, and Sexuality," in *Women's growth In Diversity*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 59; Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 43.

³⁹ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 22

⁴⁰ Ibid., 47.

⁴¹ Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Development: Therapeutic Implications of Empathy and Shame," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997), 140.

⁴² Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 38.

⁴³ Bergman and Surrey, "Woman-Man Relationship," 272 (italics mine).

ongoing ability to represent her-/himself in a relationship with increasing truth and fullness."⁴⁴ As disconnections being the normality of life, a new focus on authenticity was inevitable.⁴⁵ Third, with the enhancement or enlargement of relationship as a new goal of development, differences and conflicts were viewed positively. If difference is constructively used to "expand the boundaries of [each person's] experience," it becomes "a source of enlargement."⁴⁶ Similarly, conflicts in relationship should not be feared. What matters is "waging good conflict," which results in the "growth and enlargement of relationships."⁴⁷

Fourth, "mutuality" was primarily defined as the "movement in relationship," which is "dialogical, open, and changing."⁴⁸ For the growth in relationship to occur, people must

represent her or his own experience, feelings, and perceptions, and each can move and be moved by the other and by the relationship.⁴⁹

The term "mutuality" was newly defined as "a way of relating"⁵⁰ or "as a way of being in relationship"⁵¹ and gained more general usage than the term "empathy." The growing

⁴⁴ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 54.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Kaplan, "How Can a Group," 35.

⁴⁷ Stephen J. Bergman, Janet L. Surrey, "The Women-Man Relationship: Impasses and Possibilities," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 261.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 272.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 43.

⁵¹ Bergman and Surrey, "Woman-Man Relationship," 272.

unpopularity of the term "empathy" could be explained by the psychological notion of "need."⁵² According to Miller and Irene Stiver, two founding scholars of the Stone Center, the empathy previously understood as "the *need for* or *need to provide* empathy" ceased to be applicable since the language of "need," "gratification," or "getting," with its underlying assumption of the separate self, failed to explain "the basic human motive" of "engaging with others."⁵³ Accordingly, the language of need had to be replaced by the language of movement which is fundamentally relational. Consequently, the term "empathy" became subsumed under the overarching term of "mutuality." Mutuality was explained as "mutually empathic joining"⁵⁴ or "emphatically grounded [mutually] relational process."⁵⁵ The language of empathy was preserved by reinterpreting it in the context of movement or relationship. Similarly, the term "mutual empathy" continued to be in use while being redefined as "a quality of relationality, a movement, or dynamic of relationship."⁵⁶

Fifth, despite the uncertainty about the concept of empathy regarding its effective usage, the affective dimension of empathy as feelings and emotions continued to play an important role in the development of the relational being. The relational being approach did not throw away the potentially problematic language of empathy, mainly because of the ongoing importance of affect, feelings, or emotions "as a means of knowing, as a

⁵² Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 47-48.

⁵³ Ibid., 47-48.

⁵⁴ Bergman and Surrey, "Woman-Man Relationship," 272.

⁵⁵ Kaplan, "How Can a Group," 33.

⁵⁶ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 43.

basis for communication and action."⁵⁷ During the relational being period, feelings assumed an even more critical function in relation to differences or power differentials. If mutuality depends on a person's ability of "participating as fully as possible" in relationships,⁵⁸ then the person must not set aside her feelings, even negative ones, but bring them into her relationships. Miller and Surrey focused on such negative feeling as "anger" and re-envisioned it as "a resource to improve connection"⁵⁹ or "a resource for change."⁶⁰ Specifically, in the context of power differentials and "hierarchical relationships," "suppressed" and "disguised" anger, often seen in a person of lower order or rank, must be brought forward into a "shared" attention.⁶¹

The relational being approach differed from the previous one in two important ways. First, it dropped the word "self" and replaced it with "being." The terms "being in relation" or "relational being" gained more acceptance, rendering obsolete the previously popular terms, the "self-in-relation" and the "relational self."⁶² This shift was related to the new emphasis on movement, according to which "the self, other, and the relationship" are seen as inseparable and "mutually forming" one another.⁶³ Jordan admits that the

⁵⁷ Jordan, "Clarity in Connection," 56.

⁵⁸ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 43.

⁵⁹ Jean Baker Miller, "Rethinking Women's Anger: The Personal and the Global," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 204.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 205.

⁶¹ Jean Baker Miller, "Rethinking Women's Anger," 205-06.

⁶² Jordan, "Relational Perspective," 20.

⁶³ Ibid.

term "self-in-relation" sounds "like a distortion" giving an impression of being "too easily objectified, losing the fluidity and movement."⁶⁴ The use of alternative terms such as "being-in-relation" or "relational being" was justified by the "process quality" of the term "being (noun and verb)," which supports an emergent sense of self in and through the ongoing movements in relationship.⁶⁵

Second, the relational being theory was transformed into a gender inclusive theory and practice. The Stone center scholars of this period struggled with the issues of non-mutuality and disconnections among women,⁶⁶ which should not exist because of the innate capacity of women for the mutual empathy derived from their common experience of mothering, as was naively assumed by the self-in-relational theorists. This was a painful realization that each experience of women from different backgrounds differs, and "no essence of women that serves as a 'core'" could be assumed.⁶⁷ However, the vexing question of differences or "particularities"⁶⁸ helped the relational being theory to outgrow the previous, gender specific model and to advance towards a universal theory for both men and women. To support its claim of universality, the relational being approach relinquished the mother-daughter relationship as the relational origin, replacing it with the "Piaget's model of adaptation, comprised of accommodation and

⁶⁴ Jordan, "Do You Believe," 31.

⁶⁵ Ibid. See also Jordan, "Relational Perspective," 20.

⁶⁶ Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity*, 3.

⁶⁷ Kaplan, "How Can a Group," 34.

⁶⁸ Coll et al., "Building Connection through Diversity," 192.

assimilation."⁶⁹ This was a necessary transition since the Piagetian model is not gender specific, and its idea of "ever shifting process of equilibration" is "helpful to conceptualize an ongoing, interactive quality of a relational model of development."⁷⁰

The Third Period: A Relational Cultural Theory

The relational cultural theory in its present form came into existence with the publication of *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*⁷¹ and *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy* in 2004.⁷² As hinted by an additional adjective "cultural," relational cultural theory (RCT) highlights the issue of culture and how culture affects human, relational development, especially attending the interests of socially marginalized groups.⁷³ RCT's interest in culture is rarely new, but its preoccupation with culture is unprecedented. RCT addresses not merely the differences in culture, but the stratified differences in culture⁷⁴ which are "politicized and problematized."⁷⁵ The difference itself

⁶⁹ Jordan, "Relational Development," 139; Jordan, "Relational Perspective," 13.

⁷⁰ Jordan, "Relational Perspective," 13.

⁷¹ Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling, eds., *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004).

⁷² Maureen Walker, Wendy B. Rosen, ed., *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004).

⁷³ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 23.

⁷⁴ Maureen Walker, "Race, Self, and Society: Relational Challenges in a Culture of Disconnection," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 93.

can be value-neutral. However, the differences become problematic, relational-cultural theorists argue, when the differences are arranged according to culture's assumptions or "meta-assumptions,"⁷⁶ typically in the forms of "worldview,"⁷⁷ "vision," "philosophy,"⁷⁸ "ethos,"⁷⁹ "ideas," "values,"⁸⁰ "standards," "norms,"⁸¹ and "theories."⁸² Cultural assumptions work as the "underlying forces," asserts Maureen Walker, psychologist at Jean Baker Miller Training Institute.⁸³ "A dominant culture,"⁸⁴ best identified as "a 'power-over' culture,"⁸⁵ arranges hierarchically the differences in culture such as race,

⁷⁵ Maureen Walker and Jean Baker Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 130.

⁷⁶ Maureen Walker, "Walking a Piece of the Way: Race, Power, and Therapeutic Movement," in *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 42.

⁷⁷ Walker and Rosen, *How Connections Heal*, 7.

⁷⁸ Judith V. Jordan, "Toward Competence and Connection," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith J. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 20.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁸¹ Jordan, "Toward Competence and Connection," 22.

⁸² Judith V. Jordan and Maureen Walker, introduction to *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from The Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 4.

⁸³ Walker and Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," 132.

⁸⁴ Walker and Rosen, *How Connections Heal*, xi.

⁸⁵ Jordan and Walker, introduction to *Complexity of Connection*, 6.

ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, gender. Consequently, culture, along with its "multiple social identities," is stratified.⁸⁶ Attending to "many categories [differences] of stratification,"⁸⁷ RCT views culture as systemically interrelated whole.⁸⁸ While recognizing the culture's potential to be "an active agent" in relational development,⁸⁹ RCT puts more effort in scrutinizing the role of culture as "an agent of disconnection."⁹⁰ If unchecked, stratified culture, which goes always in tandem with "stratified relationships,"⁹¹ will cost every one of its members the diminishment of "relational capacities."⁹²

RCT adapts a concept of "relational image" to delve into the question of how culture gets into relationship and thereby produces and preserves oppression. The term "relational images" first appeared in *The Healing Connection* in 1997 during the second period of RCT.⁹³ Miller and Stiver laid a theoretical foundation of the concept, explaining that "relational images" are

the inner patterns or models of relationships that we each create out of what's happened to us. These become the key inner concepts we use to order our

⁸⁶ Jordan and Walker, introduction to *Complexity of Connection*, 6.

⁸⁷ Walker and Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," 132.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 23.

⁹⁰ Jordan and Walker, introduction to *Complexity of Connection*, 6.

⁹¹ Walker, "Race, Self, and Society," 94.

⁹² Jordan and Walker, introduction to *Complexity of Connection*, 6.

⁹³ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 39-41, 75-81.

experience... They become the framework by which we determine who we are, what we can do, and how worth-while we are.⁹⁴

The relational images function as a meaning system because when relational images are constructed, "a set of beliefs about why [one's] relationships are the way they are" is also constructed.⁹⁵ During the relational being period, the concept of relational image was treated mainly at the interpersonal level. However, it was by RCT that the socio-political implications of the concept began to take the center stage.

RCT links the "relational images" to another concept, "controlling images."⁹⁶ The term "controlling images," first coined by Patricia Hill Collins, refers to "the images we get from the dominant culture, both individually and collectively."⁹⁷ RCT pays close attention to "the ways that culture's controlling images become internalized in the individual's relational images," influencing that individual by producing "a [specific] mode of operation."⁹⁸ Controlling images, according to Miller and Stiver, function differently for each group of society, as in "the dominants and the subordinates."⁹⁹ Controlling images "serve the interests" of the powerful, while disparaging the "culturally marginalized."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 75.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 76-77.

⁹⁶ Walker and Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," 142 and 144.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 142.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," in *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 17.

RCT is descriptive in that it explains the phenomenon of "internalized oppression" through the culture's controlling images.¹⁰¹ It is also prescriptive since it guides us to overcome internalized oppression. According to RCT, one's negative, relational images can be reworked by having "corrective relational experiences"¹⁰² or by being introduced to "discrepant relational images."¹⁰³ One can also build new, positive relational images.¹⁰⁴ The basic principle is to insert an element of "uncertainty" into one's "overly generalized and fixed negative relational images."¹⁰⁵ Maturity can mean "loosing of our hold on the relational images," according to Walker.¹⁰⁶

Reworking or developing relational images aims at "personal transformation" and, further, "social change."¹⁰⁷ RCT, according to Jordan, serves not just "psychotherapy" but also offers "a conceptual frame for undertaking social action."¹⁰⁸ This expanded socio-political purview makes RCT distinguishable from the previous approaches which focused on the inter-personal dynamics. RCT practically obliterates the demarcation line

¹⁰¹ Walker and Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," 130.

¹⁰² Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 39.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 27, 49. "Discrepant relational images" refers to "exceptions to the dominant relational image." Ibid, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Jordan, "Toward Competence and Connection," 25.

¹⁰⁵ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Jean Baker Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 79.

¹⁰⁷ Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Resilience," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 29.

¹⁰⁸ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 33.

between the personal and the social. In "the culture's controlling images," Miller and Walker argue, "the external becomes the internal," and "the cultural becomes the psychological."¹⁰⁹ For RCT, "a therapy itself is a political act."¹¹⁰ However, this statement should not be understood as psychologizing socio- political action. RCT is concerned about "changing the system" itself and building "community."¹¹¹ RCT's search for its extended applicability to "all relationships" beyond "the therapy relationship" can be seen as an expression of such interest in social change.¹¹²

Focusing on relational images, RCT sets a milestone in its evolution. RCT's intensive search for "what actually exists in the relationship"¹¹³ resulted in finding relational images or "patterns of relating."¹¹⁴ As a result, RCT's core concept of relationship becomes more complex, having both relational movements and relational images. From this complexity, I will review the major concepts of RCT.

Disconnection: The pervading reality of disconnections is the price of living in "a 'power over' culture,"¹¹⁵ which is "nonrelational"¹¹⁶ or "antirelational."¹¹⁷ Considering

¹⁰⁹ Walker and Miller, "Racial Images and Relational Possibilities," 144.

¹¹⁰ Walker and Rosen, *How Connections Heal*, 32.

¹¹¹ Jordan, "Toward Competence and Connection," 21-22.

¹¹² Jordan, "Relational Resilience," 13. See also Jordan, *Relational Cultural Therapy*, 5, 25.

¹¹³ Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Awareness: Transforming Disconnection," in *The Complexity of Connection Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 54.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Jordan and Walker, introduction to *Complexity of Connection*, 6.

"social factors"¹¹⁸ such as "non-mutual relational context,"¹¹⁹ the problem of disconnection gets more serious, as evidenced by the RCT's adaptation of concepts, "chronic disconnection,"¹²⁰ "impasse,"¹²¹ and "condemned isolation."¹²² RCT's interest in social factors leads to an issue of disconnections on a group level beyond individuals, as in the disconnections suffered by the "minority groups" of society.¹²³

Disconnections are not always negative. Disconnections can work "to keep our truth alive or to maintain a sense of integrity or authenticity."¹²⁴ According to RCT's notion of "the strategies of disconnection," out of the "desire" "to connect with others," people "keep parts of themselves out of connection."¹²⁵ These strategies, Jordan and others argue, should be deeply honored because they originate from people's yearning for

¹¹⁶ Jean Baker Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 79.

¹¹⁷ Jordan, "Relational Awareness," 49.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Stephen J. Bergman and Janet L. Surrey, "Couple Therapy: A Relational Approach," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 170.

¹²² Dana L. Comstock, "Reflections on Life, Loss, and Resilience," in *How Connections Heal Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 92. Chronic disconnection, according to Comstock, leads to "condemned isolation which refers to 'the state' of 'feeling completely undeserving, unlovable, and locked out of the possibility of connection.'" Ibid.

¹²³ Jordan, "Relational Awareness," 48.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹²⁵ Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 65.

connection or "the fear or terror" for losing it.¹²⁶ Similarly, RCT sees "impasses" as "the royal road to change."¹²⁷ Human growth does not consist of just forward movements. Instead, maturity is evaluated as one's ability to constantly "'move,' to respond, rather than become caught" in impasses or negative images.¹²⁸

Shame: RCT's suspicion of sociopolitical, cultural forces explains the increase in importance of shame as a relational emotion. As "an essential relational affect," shame is, according to Jordan, "a sense of unworthiness to be in connection, and further "a sense of unworthiness about one's very being."¹²⁹ RCT focuses on an issue of "cultural shame," which is "internalized as a result of living in a hierarchical culture."¹³⁰ Shame serves "socialization"¹³¹ and works for the interest of the powerful in order "to control or disempower"¹³² the "marginalized groups" of society.¹³³

Empathy, mutual empathy, and mutuality: RCT overcame the old fear and returned the concept of empathy to its place of prominence. The resurfacing of empathy

¹²⁶ Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 65.

¹²⁷ Bergman and Surrey, "Couple Therapy," 175. An impasse can be understood as the disconnection with "a repetitive, spiraling quality." Ibid., 174.

¹²⁸ Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Learning in Psychotherapy Consultation and Supervision," in *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 26.

¹²⁹ Linda M. Hartling et al., "Shame and Humiliation: From Isolation to Relational Transformation," in *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, Maureen Walker, and Linda M. Hartling (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 122.

¹³⁰ Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 79.

¹³¹ Hartling, et al., "Shame and Humiliation," 122.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 123.

can be anticipated as we consider "stratified culture, as in any power-over culture," where most common relational images of people are built on the "premises of 'better than' and 'less than.'"¹³⁴ Empathy is redefined as "profound respect,"¹³⁵ playing a pivotal role in the ongoing "movement into healing connection."¹³⁶ "Self-empathy," the empathy directed "toward one's own experience,"¹³⁷ gains importance "in a non-relational culture" because of its function to "interrupt denial."¹³⁸ In particular, the healing of shame requires self-empathy, that is, the "acceptance of one's intrinsic worth,"¹³⁹ viewing oneself "as worthy of respect and connection."¹⁴⁰ "Mutual empathy" is taken as the foundation of RCT.¹⁴¹ Building on the previous concept of mutuality as the movement, RCT defines mutual empathy as a process of "mutual impact" where people "see, know, and feel that they have moved [others], that they have had an impact on [others]."¹⁴²

RCT prefers to use the term mutual empathy to mutuality. The term "empathy" is brought back to forefront because empathy as feelings or emotions became important again. Mutual empathy is to occur only in "real engagement, "real responsiveness," or

¹³⁴ Walker, "Walking a Piece of the Way," 43-44.

¹³⁵ Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 10; for empathy as "radical respect" look at Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 41.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 48.

¹³⁸ Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 79.

¹³⁹ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 48-49.

¹⁴⁰ Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 10.

¹⁴¹ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 16.

¹⁴² Hartling, et al., "Shame and Humiliation," 124.

"authenticity,"¹⁴³ which involves "finding emotional truth"¹⁴⁴ or "emotional transparency."¹⁴⁵ The growth or healing in relationship to occur, one must be honest about one's own emotions showing that one is "emotionally" affected by the other.¹⁴⁶ Mutual empathy according to RCT is a complicated process requiring both *affective* and *cognitive* capacities. To mutually empathize, one must *understand* both "patterns" and "strategies" of disconnection in addition to displaying "empathy for suffering."¹⁴⁷ Cognition is needed when one "sees how she or he emotionally affects the other,"¹⁴⁸ or when the other, in return, makes a "judicious" judgment about what degree he or she is going to share her/his "emotional reactions."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Jordan, "Relational Learning," 24. "Mutual empathy," defined as mutual engagement and mutual response, is almost interchangeably used with "authenticity." Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 17.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 51.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁷ Jordan, "Relational Learning," 25.

¹⁴⁸ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 47.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 51.

CHAPTER II

RELATIONAL CULTURAL THEORY IN DIALOGUE WITH OTHER RELATION ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Chapter Two examines five relationship oriented psychological theories, Chodorow's theory of reproduction of mothering, Gilligan's ethic of care, Kegan's theory of evolving self, Slee's faith development theory, and Rizzuto's theory of God Representation. Through the examination, I compare and contrast those theories with relational cultural theory (RCT), to elucidate and deepen the understanding of RCT, its concepts such as relationship, relationship differentiation, self-inclusion, disconnection, emotion, movement, culture or context, and relational images. Further, I explore Korean culture specific, relational experiences. At the end, I synthesize the discussions and conclude that female development is relational, emotional, and contextual.

RCT in Dialogue with Chodorow's Theory of Reproduction of Mothering

Nancy J. Chodorow, a feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst, in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* locates the origin of female relationality in the early mother daughter relationship and, thereby, offers a theoretical groundwork for the first period of RCT, the self-in-relation theory.¹

¹ Nancy J. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, With a New Preface* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

The feminine self, Chodorow argues, has "more flexible or permeable ego boundaries"² and experiences itself as "continuous with others"³ and "connected to the world."⁴ In contrast, the masculine self experiences itself as "separate and distinct, with a greater sense of rigid ego boundaries and differentiation."⁵

The difference in the basic experience of the self in men and women, Chodorow explains, results from two factors. First, "women mother."⁶ Second, "mothers treat and experience differently preoedipal boys and girls."⁷ Judith V. Jordan and other self-in-relation theorists explain the "development of empathy in females" by stressing the second factor.⁸ That is, mothers "experience their daughters as more like" themselves,⁹ and "their sons as a male opposite."¹⁰ Consequently, a girl continues to be "part of the dyadic, primary mother-child relationship itself"¹¹ and

experiences herself as a continuation or extension of...her mother in particular, and later of the world in general."¹²

² Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*, 169.

³ Ibid., 207.

⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 83, 173.

⁷ Ibid., 98.

⁸ Jordan, "Empathy and the Mother-Daughter Relationship," 31.

⁹ Ibid., 166.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 103.

Being "pushed out of the preoedipal relationship," however, boys' "empathic tie with their mother" has to be cut short.¹³ Chodorow's first point can further be read as "women mother and men do not."¹⁴ This statement directs our attention to the forcible influence of "family structure" where Chodorow finds "the asymmetrical organization of parenting" typical.¹⁵ Female relationality must be seen from a larger picture of society and culture, beyond the "intrapsychic and intersubjective" levels.¹⁶ The mother-daughter relationship alone is never enough to explain the female relationality. Unlike RCT in its self-in-relation period, Chodorow heeds the larger socio-cultural dimension.

Chodorow's theory foreshadows RCT in two ways. First, Chodorow's social activist stance advocating "equal parenting"¹⁷ resonates with RCT's highlighted interest in social change. Chodorow's socio-political consciousness becomes obvious when she asks, "whose interests exclusive mothering serve[?]"¹⁸ Second, Chodorow explains the formation of feminine, relational selves as the products of "social-structurally induced psychological mechanisms."¹⁹ Women's relationally motivated and relationally able "personalities"²⁰ or "psychic structures"²¹ are the result of dynamic interactions between

¹³ Jordan, "Empathy and the Mother-Daughter Relationship," 166.

¹⁴ Chodorow, *Reproduction Of Mothering*, 83.

¹⁵ Ibid., 109.

¹⁶ Ibid., x.

¹⁷ Ibid., 218, 219.

¹⁸ Jordan, "Relational Perspective, 74.

¹⁹ Chodorow, *Reproduction Of Mothering*, 211.

²⁰ Ibid., 11, 39.

²¹ Ibid., 39, 98.

the cultural and the psychological. Chodorow's view of internal and external dynamics echoes RCT's assertion that the psychological is the cultural. Chodorow explains female relationality neither by biology nor by social determinism.²² But it is the result of "socialization and social reproduction."²³ According to her, women are more relational than men as long as women mother.

I find it problematic that the female self as Chodorow describes is too permeable to be seen as all positive. Its description is accompanied by such phrases as "boundary confusion," "a lack of sense of separateness from the world,"²⁴ "overly attached, undivided, and without boundaries,"²⁵ "lack of reality sense needed by a cared for infant."²⁶ I agree with Morgan E. Forbes that Chodorow is not actively looking for an "ideal self-definition"²⁷ and is not interested in reconciling the feminine connection and the masculine separation. In Chodorow's view, "connection and separation are "negatively correlated: the more person connects, the less she separates, and vice versa."²⁸ This may suggest a failure to see the self as "dialectically constituted" since, according to Susie Orbach,

²² Chodorow, *Reproduction Of Mothering*, xi-xiv, 98.

²³ Ibid., 39.

²⁴ Ibid., 100.

²⁵ Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 137.

²⁶ Chodorow, *Reproduction Of Mothering*, 207.

²⁷ Morgan E. Forbes, "Questioning Feminine Connection," *Hypatia* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 145.

²⁸ Forbes, 142.

there is no such thing as a self apart from relationship. Similarly a self that is confirmed only in relationship speaks of a subjectivity that has difficulties knowing where it begins and ends. In such a subjectivity, the other become incorporated rather than experienced as autonomous and connected.²⁹

Chodorow may have intended to suggest an alternative vision of the female self which combines female "subjectivity" as an indispensable element.³⁰ However, her vision is not clearly articulated throughout the book, while painstakingly describing and analyzing the reality of the "destructive extremes" of each "gendered self."³¹ Regardless of her intension, Chodorow views self (or separation) and other (or connection) at the different ends of the spectrum. This view of self and other can hardly match RCT's dynamic view of self, other, and the relationship, which are positively related and generate the synergic effects for one another.

RCT in Dialogue with Gilligan's Ethic of Care

Carol Gilligan, a feminist psychologist, in her work *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*³² advocates a female "ethic of care," building on the "primacy" of "connection" in women's lives.³³ Similar to RCT, her basic

²⁹ Susie Orbach, "Some Thoughts on Nancy Chodorow's Important Contribution," *Feminism and Psychology* 12, no. 1 (2002): 24.

³⁰ Nancy Chodorow, "Response and Afterword," *Feminism and Psychology* 12, no. 1 (2002): 51. In this article, Chodorow asserts that she is concerned with the ways that social and economic developments "undermine maternal desire and subjectivity."

³¹ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 218.

³² Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³³ *Ibid.*, 38.

position is against male-biased psychologies³⁴ such as the ethic of "justice"³⁵ which builds on the premise of "separation."³⁶ The justice ethic, Gilligan asserts, fails to explain the "distinctive" nature of women's development which is oriented toward "relationships," "interdependence," and "attachment."³⁷ Gilligan sees female morality "as rising from the recognition of relationship" since

an awareness of the connection between people gives rise to a recognition of responsibility for one another, a perception of the need for response.³⁸

Gilligan's care ethic was specifically made of and for women's experience. Her ethic re-constitutes women's "moral dilemmas" as the "conflicts of responsibility"³⁹ between self and others.⁴⁰ Gilligan proposes "a sequence of three perspectives,"⁴¹ titled as "survival," "goodness," and "truth."⁴² These three perspectives progress from "selfishness" (implying "the exclusion of others") to "selflessness" (implying "the exclusion of self") towards the inclusion of both self and the other.⁴³ Women's central moral problem,

³⁴ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 14. Gilligan criticizes the tendency to "regard male behavior as the 'norm' and female behavior... as deviation."

³⁵ Ibid., 73.

³⁶ Ibid., 19.

³⁷ Ibid., 22-23.

³⁸ Ibid., 30.

³⁹ Ibid., 57-58.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 105, 70-71.

⁴¹ Ibid., 105.

⁴² Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self Problem: Process in Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 105-27.

⁴³ Carol Gilligan, "Remapping the Moral Domain: New Images of Self in Relationship," in *Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to*

according to Gilligan, is "the inclusion of self," that is, "including themselves among the people for whom they consider it moral to care."⁴⁴

Gilligan's "goodness" perspective critiques the Western convention of "the celebration of selflessness as the female virtue" and "the equation of care with self-sacrifice."⁴⁵ The "truth" perspective displays her social activist stance since "self-inclusion on the part of women challenges the convention of feminine goodness by severing the link between the care and self-sacrifice."⁴⁶ Gilligan's third perspective echoes the RCT's interest in social transformation. The progression toward maturity, Gilligan insists, aims at "an increasing differentiation of self and other and a growing comprehension of the dynamics of social interaction."⁴⁷ This idea of maturity parallels the RCT's notion of relationship differentiation.

There is another area of convergence between Gilligan and RCT: their transformation from a theory for women to a universal theory for all. Gilligan suggests a different mode of ethic for females while not repudiating the ethic of rights which is biased toward males. Gilligan suggests that the two "different"⁴⁸ or "disparate modes" of

Psychological Theory and Education, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, with Betty Bardige (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 17.

⁴⁴ Carol Gilligan, "Prologue: Adolescent Development Reconsidered," in *Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, with Betty Bardige (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), xxx.

⁴⁵ Gilligan, "Remapping Moral Domain," 17-18.

⁴⁶ Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xxx.

⁴⁷ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 98.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

ethics, which are the ethic of care (for females) and of rights (for males), are "in the end connected."⁴⁹ She argues for the complementary relationship between the two modes of ethics.

Just as the language of responsibilities provides a weblike imagery of relationships to replace a hierarchical ordering that dissolves with the coming of equality, so the language of rights underlines the importance of including in the network of care not only the other but also the self.⁵⁰

Later, Gilligan in *Mapping the Moral Domain* asserts that all people have "both justice and care concerns."⁵¹ According to what she calls "focus phenomenon," all people, regardless of their gender, have a tendency to solve their moral dilemmas "largely in terms of justice or of care,"⁵² by focusing on "either" justice related problems "or" care related problems.⁵³ Gilligan and her colleagues find that "Care Focus dilemmas are more likely to be presented by women and Justice Focus dilemmas by men."⁵⁴

Gilligan finds that "Care Focus dilemmas among men" are nearly absent from her selected research group of "advantaged North Americans."⁵⁵ Care focus is "almost exclusively" seen in "educationally advantaged North American" women samples.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 174.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 173.

⁵¹ Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xviii.

⁵² Ibid., xviii.

⁵³ Ibid., xix.

⁵⁴ Carol Gilligan and Jane Attanucci, "Two Moral Orientations," in *Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, with Betty Bardige (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 82.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xix.

Pointing at a moral tendency of specific group, Gilligan echoes RCT's interest in culture and how culture's stratified power influences human development.⁵⁷

Gilligan's care ethic changes from a "gender specific" to "gender related" theory.⁵⁸

As a result, all people are viewed, in principle, as owning both justice and care perspectives, no longer being limited by gender. This metamorphosis was made by re-imagining justice and care as "two dimensions of relationship."⁵⁹ Justice and care perspectives come under the overarching category of "relationship." According to this re-mapped ethic of care, justice and care perspectives work in a complementary way since

either perspective can represent the concerns of the other within its own terms. Within a justice framework, care becomes a matter of special obligations or supererogatory duties. Within care framework, justice becomes a matter of including the self as well as others within the compass of care.⁶⁰

Moral maturity is redefined as "an ability to see in at least two ways and to speak at least two languages," of justice and care.⁶¹ In this view, the conflict between justice and care⁶² is taken as intensifying the "potential for moral development."⁶³

⁵⁷ "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships," in *Mapping the Moral Domain: a Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, with Betty Bardige (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 119. Unfortunately, Gilligan does not delve into the issue of power stratification in culture while admitting that her findings on "two moral orientations among both men and women" should be examined "in different socioeconomic, educational, and cultural contexts."

⁵⁸ Gilligan, "Remapping Moral Domain," 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14; Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xii-xviii.

⁶⁰ "Conflicts" and "ethical ambiguity," according to Gilligan, are inevitable when the demands of equality and the demands of attachment clash." Gilligan and Grant Wiggins, 117.

⁶¹ Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xx.

⁶² Gilligan and Wiggins, "Origins of Morality," 115.

Gilligan claims the universality of her ethic by arguing that we are "[predisposed] toward justice and care" through our common "experiences of inequality and of attachment that are embedded in the relationship between child and parent."⁶⁴ Gilligan's ethic of care shares with RCT a common theoretical origin, Nancy Chodorow's theory of mother-daughter relationship.⁶⁵ Later, RCT and Gilligan's ethic relinquished their gender-specific origin, first, to explain the differences among women and, second, to claim a universal theory for all.

Gilligan's ethic of care parallels RCT regarding the important role of emotion in human development. In Gilligan's earlier work *In a Different Voice*, the role of emotions in moral development was not readily noticeable. Gilligan used the term "attachment," but it was often used as an antonym of the term "separation"⁶⁶ or as an interchangeable word for "connection"⁶⁷ or "relationship,"⁶⁸ implying an act of attaching rather than a feeling. However, in her later work *Mapping the Moral Domain*, the term "attachment" often appears to denote an affective dimension of moral life. This change has to do with care ethic's transformation into a "relationship-focused perspective on morality," which intertwines "equality" and "attachment" as the "two dimensions of relationship."⁶⁹

⁶³ Gilligan and Wiggins, "Origins of Morality," 128.

⁶⁴ Gilligan, "Remapping Moral Domain," 4-5.

⁶⁵ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 7-9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 23, 157, 161, 164, 171.

⁶⁷ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 160.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 167, 170.

⁶⁹ Gilligan and Wiggins, "Origins of Morality," 129.

Standing side by side under the encompassing notion of "relationship," the word "attachment" comes to indicate "feelings,"⁷⁰ "moral insights,"⁷¹ and "affective development,"⁷² while the term "equality" relates to "premises,"⁷³ "moral notions,"⁷⁴ and "cognitive development."⁷⁵

Gilligan and her co-researcher Grant Wiggins, Ed.D. articulate the importance of experiencing "moral emotions" or "feelings" such as "love" (connoting "attachment") and "sorrow" (connoting "detachment") since they

will affect the ability to care for oneself and for others and inform the understanding of how one should act or what actions constitute care.⁷⁶

While recognizing the role of emotions in moral development, Gilligan and Wiggins stress that "moral emotions" are the "effects of relationships" that are "'authentic'."⁷⁷ Not only affective development but also cognitive development, according to Gilligan and Wiggins, must be understood as the "effects" of "relational life," "not as final causes."⁷⁸ Accordingly, participating in and thus experiencing "attachment relationship" becomes indispensable in moral development, which is not to enjoy the feelings themselves but to

⁷⁰ Gilligan and Wiggins, "Origins of Morality," 128.

⁷¹ Ibid., 134.

⁷² Ibid., 136.

⁷³ Ibid., 128.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 136.

develop "moral sensitivity."⁷⁹ Such an instrumental value of moral feelings becomes evident in Gilligan's concept of "co-feeling" which refers to

an awareness of oneself as capable of knowing and living with the feelings of others, as able to affect others and to be affected by them.⁸⁰

Feelings, according to Gilligan and Wiggins, are for learning the "knowledge about attachment and detachment"⁸¹ and about "how to live in connection with oneself and with others."⁸² Feelings, not just reasoning and cognition, have an epistemological value. Emotions stand by themselves as a legitimate way of learning, not as a mere accessory to lubricate or facilitate cognitive learning. Gilligan's later remapping of the ethic resonates with the second period of RCT, relational being theory. RCT's emphasis on relationship itself, RCT's phrase, "and the relationship,"⁸³ and RCT's idea of both affecting and being affected are found in Gilligan's later work.

RCT in Conversation with Kegan's Theory of Evolving Self

Robert Kegan, a developmental psychologist, in his work *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* shares commonalities with RCT.⁸⁴ First, in much the same manner with RCT, Kegan's theory of evolving self (TES) starts with the basic premise that a bias toward "differentiation" or "separation" is pretentious and

⁷⁹ Gilligan and Wiggins, "Origins of Morality," 119-20.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 123.

⁸¹ Ibid., 124.

⁸² Ibid., 123.

⁸³ Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," xvii.

⁸⁴ Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

misleading.⁸⁵ Instead, human development, Kegan asserts, ought to be "equally about integration, attachment, inclusion."⁸⁶ RCT, from the second period on, has taken Piaget's adaptation model as its theoretical foundation. Similarly, Kegan builds his theory on Piaget's model of "adaptation," which revolves around "the tension" between "assimilation" and "accommodation"⁸⁷ or, put it differently, "the balance between subject or self and object or other."⁸⁸

Based on the Piagetian framework, Kegan re-envision's human development as "the ongoing conversation between the individuating [self] and the world,"⁸⁹ which consists of two constituents; "the process of movement," and "stage" or "evolutionary truce," or "the evolutionary motion" of "differentiation" and "reintegration."⁹⁰ According to TES, the person emerges through differentiation from her embeddedness in the world or in "what is [then] taken as self." Emerging as self, the person relates through reintegration to the world or to "what is [now] taken as other [or object]."⁹¹ Kegan adopting Piagetian subject-object dynamics defines the development as "a lifelong process" which consists of

⁸⁵ Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 108.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 43-44.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 39. "Stage" or "truce" results from "the consequence of a given subject object balance." Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 76, 77, 39.

a succession of qualitative differentiations of the self from the world, with a qualitatively more extensive object with which to be in relation created each time.⁹²

The self relates to the world through "reintegration."⁹³ Therefore, development is "not a matter of increasing differentiation alone, but of increasing relationship to the world."⁹⁴

Kegan, similar to RCT, perceives human development in the context of incessant relationships, assuming no drastic separation or discontinuity.⁹⁵ Kegan's notion of reintegration sounds much like the RCT's concept of "relationship differentiation."

Second, Kegan's TES and RCT, both building on Piagetian adaptation model, share the common emphasis on *movement*. The "motion" of the self, Kegan argues, is "the prior context" of "evolution" or development.⁹⁶ Movement, according to Kegan, is inevitable because of "two great human yearnings" for "autonomy and inclusion."⁹⁷ These two yearnings are always in "tension" and motivate the self constantly to move "back and forth between" them to resolve the tension.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the "motion,"⁹⁹ "activity,"¹⁰⁰ or "process"¹⁰¹ is what essentially defines self, whereas "each

⁹² Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 77.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 107-108.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 108.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 3, 8, 39, 169.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 8, 15, 81, 169.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, 39.

developmental stage or balance" is seen as "a temporary solution to the lifelong tension."¹⁰² This tendency to move constantly is shared "by all living things" in order to "preserve and enhance [their] integrity."¹⁰³

Third, similar to RCT, Kegan's theory of evolving self (TES) brings culture into focus by questioning how culture affects human development. TES displays keen interest in the movements of individual dynamically interacting with "bigger environment"¹⁰⁴ or what Kegan calls "psychosocial environment."¹⁰⁵ "Psychosocial environment," "holding environment," and "a culture of embeddedness" are the terms Kegan interchangeably uses to denote "the particular form of the world in which the person is embedded."¹⁰⁶ The term "psychosocial contexts (or environment)" explains the phenomenon that "from the point of view of the person, [psychosocial contexts] *are* him or her."¹⁰⁷ This is a different expression of the same dynamic where the psychological is the cultural, as seen in RCT. According to TES, human development always entails "an emergence from embeddedness in" or

¹⁰² Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 108.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 115-16. According to Kegan, "psychosocial environment" or "psychosocial contexts" includes "the mothering one; the family; role-recognizing institutions of family, school, or peer groups; mutually reciprocal one-to-one relationships; identity-confirming contexts for publicly recognized, self-regulating performance; intimate adult relations." *Ibid.*, 257.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 115-16. The term "holding environment" is coined and first used by Donald Winnicott, an English psychologist.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 257.

transcending my culture and creating a distinction between what now appears as the culture's definition of me and what is "really me."¹⁰⁸

For Kegan, human development refers to "a succession of holding environments, a life history of cultures of embeddedness."¹⁰⁹ The individuals' culture of embeddedness, Kegan argues, supports human development through three tasks of "holding on," "letting go," and "remaining in place,"¹¹⁰ or through three "functions of confirmation, contradiction, and continuity."¹¹¹ Embeddedness culture works on two levels: "the culture at large and the more intimate culture of embeddedness."¹¹² The culture at large is no less influential than the immediate one. Kegan observes that men are biased "toward differentiation," and women "toward inclusion."¹¹³ He explains this difference as the result of "the differing embeddedness cultures available to men and women."¹¹⁴

Therefore, Kegan warns us that

the deprivation and blindness of the culture at large will have rather direct consequences for development in the years normally associated with adulthood.

¹⁰⁸ Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 257.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 116.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 121-32. "Remaining in place" means to "stick around so that [the embeddedness of culture] can be reintegrated." Ibid., 121.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 258.

¹¹² Ibid., 211.

¹¹³ Ibid., 208.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 211.

The cultural supports become "a matter of social arrangements (looked at externally) and ideology (looked at internally)."¹¹⁵ This view echoes the RCT's latest emphasis on social transformation (changing the external) and relational images (changing the internal).

Lastly, as it is the case for RCT, emotion plays an important role in Kegan's theory of evolving self. According to TES, the "evolutionary activity" involves both "cognition *and* affect."¹¹⁶ Evolutionary activity is cognitive since the "balancing and rebalancing of subject and object, or self and other," is "naturally epistemological."¹¹⁷ Evolutionary activity is also affective. We are the evolutionary "motion" itself so that it is inevitable for us to "experience emotion."¹¹⁸ For instance, when we make evolutionary movements, we experience "defending, surrendering, and reconstructing [of] a center," which becomes "the source of our emotions."¹¹⁹ "Pain," Kegan argues, is inevitable whenever we resist to "the movement of life of which we are a part."¹²⁰ "Grief, mourning, and loss" are often experienced since every transitional movement involves "the death of the old self" or the demise of "a way to know the world."¹²¹ In TES, emotion is taken as the integral part of evolutionary movement.

¹¹⁵ Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 211. This, according to Kegan, is the case specifically for the "institutional self" in the fourth evolutionary balance."

¹¹⁶ Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*, 81.

¹¹⁷ Kegan, *Evolving Self*, 12.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

RCT in Dialogue with Slee's Theory of Women's Faith Development

Nicolas Slee, a feminist practical theologian, in *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*,¹²² suggests a faith development theory which explains women's "faith lives."¹²³ Slee builds on feminist psychological theories of Chodorow, Gilligan, and relational cultural theorists (specifically, the "self-in-relation" period).¹²⁴ Slee offers a glimpse of how relationality can be applied to women's faith or spirituality. Listening to women's faith accounts, Slee distinguishes "what is said" or "the content" from "how it is said" or "the process of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee."¹²⁵ As a result, she finds the women's faith fundamentally relational in terms of both content and process. I examine the relational nature of women's faith, paying attention to how Slee draws on RCT, Gilligan, and others.

From the women's faith accounts, Slee identifies three "core patterns" or "major generative themes,"¹²⁶ which are "alienation," "awakening," and "relationality."¹²⁷ The pattern of "alienation," according to Slee, signifies the "loss of self,"¹²⁸ "the divided

¹²² Nicola Slee, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

¹²³ Ibid., 12, 46-47.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 23-24.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 80; Nicola Slee, "The Patterns and Processes of Women's Faith Development: A Qualitative Approach," *British Journal of Theological Education* 14, no. 1 (2003): 96-97.

¹²⁶ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 81.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 81, 109, 135.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 81.

self,"¹²⁹ or the "lack of authentic connection with self, other, and God."¹³⁰ The loss of self results from woman's "reckless giving up of self" to "the male other-father, partner, lover or God,"¹³¹ "her experience of abusive male power"¹³² which is often reinforced by the "images and stories of invasive male presence,"¹³³ or her getting stuck "in a negative God image"¹³⁴ and in "social expectations of women's roles."¹³⁵ Slee sees women's alienation primary resulting from "cultural and religious constraints."¹³⁶ Her concept of alienation roughly parallels Gilligan's "goodness" perspective where women fail to include themselves as the objects of care by blindly following the cultural convention of female goodness.

Alienation is also explained in terms of the divided self. Woman in alienation experiences herself as the divided self which fails to authentically connect to self, other, and God when she cannot bring into relationship "voice,"¹³⁷ "feeling," "bodily awareness,"¹³⁸ or real and authentic selfhood,¹³⁹ due to the "fear of judgment and

¹²⁹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 94, 106.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹³¹ Ibid., 100.

¹³² Ibid., 104.

¹³³ Ibid., 105.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 97.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 106.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 83-84, 86-88.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 90.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 82, 90, 94, 110.

rejection."¹⁴⁰ Slee's discussion of the divided, "split,"¹⁴¹ or "fragmented"¹⁴² self mirrors RCT's concept of "the strategies of disconnection," which refers to one's failure to bring her real or authentic self into a relationship, setting the large part of herself aside due to her fear of losing the relationship. Slee's notion of alienation can also be best represented by a sense of "stuckness"¹⁴³ or "being unable to move forward,"¹⁴⁴ which corresponds to RCT's concept of disconnection or impasse. Moreover, Slee resonates with RCT in terms of her recognition of underlying cultural forces. From her view, alienation is often caused by culture's meta-assumptions such as "sanctioned models of identity or religious belief,"¹⁴⁵ and "alienating symbols."¹⁴⁶

Women's experience of alienation, according to Slee, may be followed by "the liberating experience of "awakening."¹⁴⁷ Awakening as a prominent pattern of women's faith explains woman's "coming to self,"¹⁴⁸ "coming together... of different parts of the self" or of "parts of herself previously denied,"¹⁴⁹ "neglected, [and] unknown."¹⁵⁰ It also

¹⁴⁰ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 87.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 82, 92, 94.

¹⁴² Ibid., 89, 106.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 100.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 106.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 107.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 109.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 110.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 115.

signifies women's making "choice for freedom and self-definition"¹⁵¹ or "becoming real with herself, with others, and with God."¹⁵² Slee's notion of awakening as coming to self roughly corresponds to Gilligan's concept of inclusion of self, with the underlying common assumption that coming to self, women overcome women-excluding, socio-cultural and religious conventions.

On the other hand, Slee compares awakening as the "birth of a new self."¹⁵³ Awakening as the new birth is to be understood as "not a once-for-all experience," but as something that occurs repeatedly.¹⁵⁴ Slee emphasizes the "continuity between the past and present" or between the old and new self.¹⁵⁵ Her notion of awakening as the new birth coincides with Kegan's notion of "reintegration" according to which the new self is new, but it is not new because the new self is made from the old self.

Slee stresses that the awakening of self occurs through "ordinary, concrete and mundane experience(s),"¹⁵⁶ through the experiences "of intimacy," including "sexual intimacy,"¹⁵⁷ "motherhood,"¹⁵⁸ or "an unconditional commitment to others,"¹⁵⁹ especially

¹⁵¹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 118.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 113.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 133.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 121.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 125.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 127. According to Slee, before one unconditionally commits to others, there must be "already established a level of self."

those "who are different."¹⁶⁰ These ordinary experiences also include interpersonal events such as "one-to-one encounters" and "belonging" to groups and communities,¹⁶¹ including but not limited to "female community."¹⁶² Slee asserts that even when people experience the awakenings "through the discovery of their creative gifts and abilities," which can occur solitarily, they still need others to affirm them.¹⁶³ She explains women's growth as "the gradual extension of the powers of selfhood to wider and riskier contexts" in the presence of the supporting and affirming "human other."¹⁶⁴ Reverberating with RCT's notion of "relationship differentiation" as the goal of female development, Slee argues that the developing, female self never ceases to be in relationships.

"Relationality" is one of the three patterns Slee identifies in women's faith stories. Women's faith, Slee insists, is so thoroughly relational that women identify faith with having "an intimate personal relationship" with God and perceive the relationship with God itself as salvific.¹⁶⁵ Women's faith can be relational in a "wider" sense beyond such personal level,¹⁶⁶ by perceiving reality as pervasively interconnected to all.¹⁶⁷ With a sense of "interconnectedness of all,"¹⁶⁸ women find God's pervasive presence everywhere

¹⁶⁰ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 128.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 146-47.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

and in everything.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, women's relational faith can be manifested in their finding God from ordinary things such as "the routine chores of home-making and hospitality,"¹⁷⁰ or in their "profound empathic connection to others in pain, suffering and need."¹⁷¹ Slee argues, in an evolved form of faith, women substitute finding and "loving God through each other" for previously held personal "love-relation" with God.¹⁷² Consequently, Slee considers the growth of faith through human others as a more mature form of faith than the personal relationship with God.

As Slee emphasizes the growth of women's faith through relationships, she stresses the inclusion of women's self in such relationships. She is concerned about the danger of women's "losing their own sense of self in over-identification with other's pain."¹⁷³ For women to "care for the suffering other," the strong and stable sense of self is the first requirement.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, Slee argues, women's sense of interdependence with God and others begins with their capacity to have "a strong sense of self."¹⁷⁵ Loving God through each other is not possible without loving my self first. Self-acceptance becomes indispensable for the fulfillment of women's relational faith. Slee asserts that women's

¹⁶⁹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 148.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 152.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷² Ibid., 143.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 151.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 145.

faith is "most pervasively relational" when its "goal" is "integration,"¹⁷⁶ which means accepting and integrating into a unified whole "all that has been in one's life," "in and through the love of God."¹⁷⁷

According to Slee, women's relationships with God and others do not always go together.¹⁷⁸ For example, Slee discovers that for some black women in her study, faith has an instrumental value for survival, and their relationship with God functions to affirm

the value of the self *over and against* the value of the wider society, including the church, which constantly undermined the worth of black people and set limits on their selfhood.¹⁷⁹

For black women, loving God and loving others inversely correlates. With this finding, Slee, like RCT, shows the sensitivity to differences among women of different culture.

On the other hand, Slee pays attention not just to the content but to the "process," "shape," "structure," or "dynamic" of each interview.¹⁸⁰ She finds that there is "an unconscious mirroring or matching of process with content,"¹⁸¹ which refers to a phenomenon where

the pattern of the interview itself reflected, in significant ways, the larger shape of the women's faith development.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 154.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 158.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 160.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 145 (*italics mine*).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 80.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 64.

¹⁸² Ibid.

Slee studies the process of each faith interview and identifies six "linguistic faithing strategies,"¹⁸³ which are "conversational faithing," "metaphoric faithing," "narrative faithing," "personalized faithing," "conceptual faithing," and "apophatic faithing."¹⁸⁴ Slee's discussion of these faithing strategies confirms the relational nature of women's faith. "Personalized faithing" refers to the way women express their faith "by reference to human exemplars."¹⁸⁵ "Parental figures," "mentors," "friends and partners," and even people with "only fleeting contact" are those who serve as women's faith exemplars.¹⁸⁶ This "great variety" of exemplars testifies women's "need to enshrine faith in a human other or others."¹⁸⁷

"Conceptual faithing" refers to "abstract, conceptual forms of talking and thinking about faith," by employing psychological, theological concepts.¹⁸⁸ Slee finds that conceptual faithing is "not dominant" among the women of her study.¹⁸⁹ When women use the conceptual faithing, they do so in a "contextual and relational" manner, using theological concepts in a way to "give meaning to a life of a personal struggle," or stretching out theological beliefs onto their own "political and social groundings."¹⁹⁰ The other four, "conversational," "narrative," "metaphoric," and "apophatic" faithing

¹⁸³ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 62.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-80.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-73.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

strategies gain potency in women's faith and life by their liberating and empowering effects. "Conversational" and "narrative" faithing strategies have potential to strengthen women's selfhood. By telling her own stories against "the patriarchal silencing of women,"¹⁹¹ a woman "claims a narrative agency, an ownership of her story."¹⁹² The very act of telling her own stories, the process of telling itself is "empowering."¹⁹³

"Metaphoric faithing," that is, talking and thinking about faith using metaphor or "imaging" is "dominant" for women's faithing.¹⁹⁴ Slee notices the subversive power in the "originality" of metaphors or images. She argues, "the 'new naming'" utilizing "the originality of the images" overthrows the patriarchal silencing or "the androcentric 'false naming.'"¹⁹⁵ Metaphor or imagination is especially powerful "in the context of alienation and paralysis."¹⁹⁶ Slee argues,

where logic and rationality can see no way forward out of the impasse, the creative imagination may intuit a way, and metaphor or image may capture that wisdom.¹⁹⁷

"Apophatic faithing" refers to shaping of faith by means of "implicit, indirect, negative, or contradictory terms."¹⁹⁸ Slee recognizes its positive functions in two ways. First, the apophatic faithing is of necessity for those "in a transition phase" moving out of "the old"

¹⁹¹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 63.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁹⁶ Slee, "Patterns and Processes," 103.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁹⁸ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 76.

meanings" toward the "new meanings."¹⁹⁹ For those in transitioning, "silences, omission and paradoxical imagery" can be taken positively as "cooperative strategies" by which to solicit support for their "new naming."²⁰⁰ Second, women assert "voice and agency" through "a negative naming."²⁰¹ Using the negative naming, women rebel against oppression and inadequacy, and prepare themselves for "more adequate forms of faith."²⁰² According to Slee, "intuitive," "imaginative," "metaphoric," "concrete,"²⁰³ "bodily," and "relational"²⁰⁴ forms of knowing are more dominant styles of faithing for women than the cognitive one. Slee also stresses that 'not-knowing' itself, which often accompanies "paralysis," "impasse," or apophatic faithing, must be taken positively.²⁰⁵

Slee shares with RCT their common interest in transforming and healing power of relational images. Like RCT, Slee stresses the transforming, subverting power of images or imagining, which liberates women from their oppressive realities. Examining Slee's contribution to James Fowler's faith development theory (FDT), I discover more common interests between Slee and RCT. Similar to RCT, Slee's research began by her critical awareness that the established "androcentric" models of spiritual maturity²⁰⁶ are biased

¹⁹⁹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 77-78.

²⁰⁰ Slee, "Patterns and Processes," 102.

²⁰¹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 79.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 165.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 168.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 167.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 3.

toward "separation and autonomy" and, hence, "biased against women."²⁰⁷ Slee corrects FDT by arguing that women's faith development is not about the separation of self but about the self-inclusion in the context of relationship. For Slee and RCT, relationship or connection is a major theme of women's development or faith. The biggest addition of Slee to FDT is her close examination of the diverse contents of women's faith, which FDT omits due to its limitation inherent in the "structural stage theories."²⁰⁸ Slee's intense interest in the *contents* of faith corresponds with RCT's latest interest in the *contents* of relationship, that is, relational images.

RCT in Conversation with Rizzuto's Theory of Birth of the Living God

RCT and Slee stress the importance of images in the lives of women by paying attention to images' potentials for either oppressing or liberating women. By examining Rizzuto's theory of God representation (TGR) in light of Slee and RCT, I will provide more insight about liberating and empowering potentials of images. Ana-Maria Rizzuto, M.D., a psychiatrist, in *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* suggests a theory about the formation and reformation of the God representation. According to Rizzuto, the God representation (or God images) is made of and used for one's relations with significant others.²⁰⁹ Rizzuto locates the origin of God representation in the child's

²⁰⁷ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 32.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁰⁹ Rizzuto explains the difference between the God representation and God images as follows. The images of God, "combined in multiple forms, produce the prevailing God representation in a given individual at a given time." Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 47. In this section of the paper, I use the term "God representation"

experience with her parents. The "basic personality"²¹⁰ of God representation comes from the "parental traits," that is, what the child "finds" from her parents.²¹¹ However, it is also partially the creation of child's imagination, "far beyond that inspired by actual parents."²¹² Not only "the parent of real life but the wished-for parent and the feared parent" contribute to the formation of child's God representation.²¹³

The relational significance of God representation (or God images) is also shown in its usage. The God representation, according to Rizzuto, affects and is used to maintain individual's sense of self or "sense of worth and safety."²¹⁴ Moreover, it is used to maintain "real and fantasized relations with" primary objects such as parents.²¹⁵ Rizzuto summarizes the function of God representation using the term "psychic usefulness" according to which it serves to protect

the minimum amount of relatedness to primary objects and a baseline of self-respect and obscure hope through common maneuvers.²¹⁶

The usefulness of God representation is fundamentally "object-related,"²¹⁷ maintaining the "meaningful relations with oneself, others, and the world at large."²¹⁸

interchangeably with the term God image(s) in places where the distinction is not necessary.

²¹⁰ Rizzuto, 199.

²¹¹ Ibid., 208-09.

²¹² Ibid., 46.

²¹³ Ibid., 44.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 209, 208, 179, 51.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 208.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 179.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 210.

Rizzuto sees the dynamic interactions among self, others (or "objects"), and the God representation.²¹⁹ The change in one's perception of self, or of one's relations to significant others or "primary objects," demand the change in one's God representation.²²⁰ Consequently, not to lose its usefulness, an individual's God representation must be "updated,"²²¹ by keeping up with her changing relational and developmental needs.²²² If the individual fails to renew her God representation, according to "each developmental crisis," it loses its relevance "for lasting belief."²²³ Hence, the God representation "conditions belief or unbelief."²²⁴

Both Slee and relational cultural theorists pay close attention to the importance of images regarding their potential to work for either liberation or oppression. Slee and RCT alert us to the working of underlying cultural forces hidden in controlling images (RCT) or negative God images (Slee). According to Slee and RCT, images are not value-neutral. However, Rizzuto's discussion of God images lacks such political

²¹⁸ Rizzuto, 179.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 51.

²²⁰ Ibid., 52, 78, 196, 200, 209.

²²¹ Ibid., 209. Rizzuto argues that the rudimentary personality of God is formed "at the time of resolution of the oedipal crisis." Ibid., 208.

²²² Ibid., 196, 200, 202, 203. The transformation of God image involves more than serving simple relational needs. For example, intellectual, emotional, and sexual growth during adolescence requires an reelaboration of the God representation. Ibid., 202. According to Rizzuto, "each epigenetic phenomenon" or "each new life crisis" presents a new chance to rework the God representation. Ibid., 200.

²²³ Ibid., 208. When the God representation loses its meaning and relevance, according to Rizzuto, it "can be set aside without being forgotten" (ibid., 202), for later being "used, neglected, or repressed" (ibid., 208).

²²⁴ Ibid., 208.

consciousness. Rizzuto recognizes the formation of God representation as the "cultural" and "social" phenomenon beyond the interpersonal.²²⁵ For example, when a child lives in a subculture where she hears people talking, either verbally or through "gestures and hints," about God as "real, existing, powerful and in charge of the world,"²²⁶ God becomes real to her. "Beliefs and actions" of subculture give "the confirmatory seal of existence" to God of child.²²⁷ Rizzuto views the socio-cultural influence on the formation of God images simply as a matter of socialization, failing to see it from the politicized perspective. Rizzuto deals with culture as part of general "background of the household."²²⁸ She does not address culture on a macro-level, that is, viewing culture as a system with the stratified power in it, because her major interest is in the child-parent dynamics as a family unit. The politicized view of RCT and Slee challenges Rizzuto's naive view on cultural influence in the formation of God images.

On the other hand, RCT and Slee suggest that images can be reshaped or replaced. RCT suggests that by introducing new relational images, one can reshape old, negative relational images. Slee argues for the originality or creativity of images, which has the subversive power to overturn oppressive reality. In contrast, Rizzuto is not optimistic about replacing or reshaping of God images because it is costly and may be impossible. First, it is costly. Given the object related importance of God representation, people cannot simply change their God images without risking their own sense of safety and

²²⁵ Rizzuto, 182.

²²⁶ Ibid., 194.

²²⁷ Ibid., 50.

²²⁸ Ibid., 45.

worth as well as the relatedness to significant others. Accordingly, new God images cannot be forced upon individuals without taking into consideration the individuals' psychic needs.

Second, introducing new God images may be impossible or, at least, ineffective. Rizzuto distinguishes the "conceptually based" God from "the representation of God."²²⁹ While God images are "enmeshed" with "interpersonal experience," the conceptual God is the God "fabricated mostly at the level of secondary-process thinking," such as "the God of the theologians."²³⁰ Therefore, when a new conceptual God, devoid of the "images of previous interpersonal experience,"²³¹ is introduced, "it adds nothing" "emotionally," according to Rizzuto.²³²

Ann Belford Ulanov, a professor of psychiatry and religion, makes a similar distinction between "subjective-object" and "objective-object" God images.²³³ Ulanov's discussion on these two kinds of object God both confirms and challenges Rizzuto. Ulanov's notion of "subjective-object God-images," which is similar to Rizzuto's idea of God as "a special transitional object,"²³⁴ refers to God who is found in "everyday stuff of our lives"²³⁵ and created by us through our imagination.²³⁶ Subjective-object God-

²²⁹ Rizzuto, 47.

²³⁰ Ibid., 47.

²³¹ Ibid., 48.

²³² Ibid., 200.

²³³ Ann Belford Ulanov, *Finding Space: Winnicott, God, and Psychic Reality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 22-36.

²³⁴ Rizzuto, 178.

²³⁵ Ulanov, 23.

images, similar to Rizzuto's idea of psychic usefulness, function "to hold us in being..., making us feel alive and real, with a bridge to infinite."²³⁷ Subjective-object God images are about God who is "what I need God to be for God to be real to me."²³⁸ Subjective God images are useful since they function

positively as a resource in time of trouble, as a refuge in time of sorrow, or as a resting place to relax completely into just who we are.²³⁹

Similar to Rizzuto who views God images as a factor which conditions belief or disbelief, Ulanov sees subjective God images as underpinning "whatever belief in God we may hold or be losing."²⁴⁰

What Ulanov calls objective-object God images are similar to Rizzuto's idea of the conceptual God. "Objective-object God images," according to Ulanov, concern God who are found "in religious tradition," especially in "religious texts."²⁴¹ The objective God is "not derivative from our experiences," but exists "as external to us without reference to our needs or wishes or view of reality" and thereby feels "not necessarily real to us"²⁴² As in Rizzuto's evaluation of conceptual God, Ulanov conceives objective-object God images as holding no or less emotional value.

²³⁶ Ulanov, 26. Ulanov perceives that the subjective God images can be owned by a group, not just by an individual. Ibid., 23.

²³⁷ Ibid., 23.

²³⁸ Ibid., 36.

²³⁹ Ibid., 23.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 24.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 26. Once picked up from the religious texts, the "'official' pictures of God," according to Ulanov, "evolve into doctrinal images and ritual actions."

²⁴² Ibid., 16.

Rizzuto downplays the conceptual God which emotionally adds nothing. Ulanov challenges Rizzuto by assigning a privileged status to objective-object God images. Ulanov views objective-object God images as originating “from the depth divine mystery,”²⁴³ which she identifies with Scripture and Tradition.²⁴⁴ Relying on this special, privileged status, the objective-object God may conflict with, cancel, or confirm our subjective pictures of God, standing over them.²⁴⁵ Ulanov perceives subjective and objective God images in a complementary relationship. Objective-object God images, which are retrieved from the “warehouse of imagery in tradition,” feed our subjective God images, and by using our “particular” subjective God images as keys, we “gain entry to the traditional images.”²⁴⁶ Not willing to draw a clear demarcation line between subjective and objective God images,²⁴⁷ Ulanov emphasizes the “necessarily mixture” of subjective and objective God images to “find liveliness and a truth that feels personal and real to us while transcending our human norms.”²⁴⁸ The biggest challenge of Ulanov to Rizzuto is that the conceptual God or objective-object God should be intentionally put into what D.D. Winnicott calls the illusionary space, the area of playing,²⁴⁹ for God to

²⁴³ Ulanov, 36.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 23, 26.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁴⁶ Rizzuto, 31.

²⁴⁷ Ulanov, 29.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 30. Accordingly, Ulanov mainly concerns reductionism of two extremes, i.e., immanence without transcendence (i.e., subjective-object God) or transcendence without immanence (i.e., the objective-object God). *Ibid.*, 20-21.

²⁴⁹ Both Ulanov and Rizzuto draw on D.W. Winnicott's idea of “the intermediate area,” which refers to “the area that is allowed to the infant between primary creativity

"feel real to us."²⁵⁰ "The bounds of subjective-objective dualism" in our experiencing God can and should be broken, according to Ulanov.²⁵¹

There are two issues regarding the applicability of Rizzuto's theory to my research. First issue pertains to the universality of God representation. According to Rizzuto, every

child in the Western world brought up in ordinary circumstances ...[forms] at least a rudimentary God representation, which he may use for belief or not.²⁵²

However, it is questionable whether I can directly apply her study to non-Westerners who has grown up in a country where Christianity has not been the dominant socialization force.²⁵³ Second issue involves the theoretical foundation of Rizzuto's theory which builds on the "separation-individuation" models of Freud and Erickson.²⁵⁴ This male-biased, developmental foundation makes me wonder about the applicability of her theory as it is applied to women whose developmental path and goal are different from men.

and objective perception based on reality-testing" and of "transitional phenomena," which "represents the early stages of use of illusion" in this area. D.W Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 1971), 5, 11, 14. Defining God as "a special transitional object," Rizzuto locates God in Winnicott's "illusory" "psychic space." Rizzuto, 177-178. Ulanov, following Winnicott, locates religious experience "in transitional space," that is, "in the space in between" "subjectivity and objectivity," "playing and reality. Ulanov, 20, 18, 14, 15.

²⁵⁰ Ulanov, 18.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 26.

²⁵² Rizzuto, 200.

²⁵³ For example, I came from the multi-religious context of Korea. As briefly mentioned at the beginning, Confucian culture, especially in terms of the parent-child interactions, has been the dominant socialization force in Korea.

²⁵⁴ Rizzuto, 51.

RCT in Dialogue with Psychologies of Korean People

RCT, from its second period on, has attended the issue of differences among women. Appreciating RCT's sensitivity to cultural difference, I will review the relational experience of Korean people from the perspectives of Asian and Korean psychologies. Hazel Rose Markus, a social psychologist, and Shinobu Kitayama, a psychologist known for his cross-cultural study, propose that many Asian people, including Koreans, construe themselves as "interdependent" selves.²⁵⁵ According to Markus and Kitayama, the interdependent self, typically found in Asian cultures, knows itself as "the self-in-relation to specific others in particular contexts."²⁵⁶ What defines interdependent selves is the role of "others" who "become an integral part of setting, situation, or context to which the self is connected, fitted, and assimilated."²⁵⁷ To define itself, the interdependent self "requires others" who "are included within the boundaries of the self."²⁵⁸ The primary task of interdependent selves is not "autonomy" but "interdependence" or "connection" according to which they try

to fit in with relevant others, to fulfill and create obligation, and in general to become part of various interpersonal relationships.²⁵⁹

Markus and Kitayama notice that interdependent selves exhibit "the reciprocal interdependence with others."²⁶⁰ That is, to fulfill their own goals, interdependent selves

²⁵⁵ Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review* 98, no. 2 (1991): 225.

²⁵⁶ Markus and Kitayama, 227.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 227.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 245-46.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 227.

satisfy others' goals, out of the expectation that by aiding others' goals, their own goals will, in turn, be taken care of by the others.²⁶¹ Therefore, to practice reciprocal

interdependence, interdependent selves need "to 'read' others' minds and

to feel and think what others are feeling, to absorb this information without being told, and then to help others satisfy their wishes and realize their goals."²⁶²

On the other hand, Markus and Kitayama argue, interdependent selves' attention to others are "highly selective."²⁶³ That is, interdependent selves discriminatorily associate "with others with whom [they] share a common fate," such as "family members" or "the work group."²⁶⁴ Similarly, interdependent selves tend to rigidly make "the in-group-out-group distinction."²⁶⁵

Masaki Yuki, a social psychologist, defines East Asians as "relational" selves with a strong "in-group" orientation.²⁶⁶ East Asians, according to Yuki, are motivated to foster "cooperative behaviors" and to manage "relational harmony *within* in-groups."²⁶⁷ For East Asians, in-group relations become the source of identities which are "distinct

²⁶⁰ Markus and Kitayama, 229.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 229.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Masak Yuki, "Intergroup Comparison Versus Intragroup Relationships: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Social Identity Theory in North American and East Asian Cultural Contexts," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 2003): 168-70.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 168.

from, but firmly connected to, fellow in-group members via interpersonal relations."²⁶⁸

Yuki stresses that "the in-group" means not a "depersonalized,"²⁶⁹ "undifferentiated and interchangeable" entity, but "a structured network" in which each individual member "is aware of the exact location of the self within such a network."²⁷⁰

Yuki's idea of East Asian relational selves with an exclusive focus on intragroup relationships supports Markus and Kitayama's idea of highly selective nature of interdependent selves' interactions with others. Preoccupied with in-group relationships, Asian interdependent selves or relational selves fall short of reaching RCT's goal of relationship differentiation, which refers to the growth of self in, through, and towards the increasing *complexity* and *breadth* of relationships. Asian relational selves are likely to fail in increasing the complexity, by sticking to a specific role or location assigned to them by the group they belong to. They are likely to fail in expanding the breadth, by focusing on intra group relationships with the exclusion of intergroup relationships.

Sang-Chin Choi and Kibum Kim, a social psychologists from Korea, assert that Koreans are context-oriented selves in a sense that "an individual's mind is qualified contextually by situations and objects."²⁷¹ "Relational-contextual" selves of Korea,

²⁶⁸ Yuki, 170.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 171.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 172.

²⁷¹ Sang-Chin Choi and Kibum Kim, "Conceptual Exploration of the Korean Self in Comparison with the Western Self," in *Progress in Asian Social Psychology: Conceptual and Empirical Contributions*, ed. Kuo-Shu Yang, Kwang-Kuo Hwang, Paul B. Pedersen, and Ikuo Daibo (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 37. Since "no Korean word equivalent to *self*" is found, Choi and Kim use the word "mind," which is "similar in function to *self*." Ibid 30, 33. "Korean *mind*" refers to "the quality of agency or potency" and is "interpreted in the form of existence and state." Ibid, 34.

according to Choi and Kim, give priority to "expectations or their relationships" over "presenting straightforward ideas or opinions for a given issue."²⁷² Koreans are motivated more to "internalize and grow a socially idealized self than to identity their own unique self."²⁷³ Consequently, for Koreans, "self-actualization" means "social self-actualization."²⁷⁴ Korean, relational-contextual selves resemble Asian collectivist selves in a sense that they are inclined "toward shared ethics and values of importance to the society," trying "to be socially more desirable."²⁷⁵ According to Yoshihisa Kashima and other psychologists, the definite aspect of "collectivist" selves is that they

either make no distinctions between personal and collective goals, or if they do make such distinctions, they subordinate their personal goals to the collective goals.²⁷⁶

Koreans, in my opinion, are collectivist selves as they subordinate their personal goals to the collective goal. Kashima and other psychologists argue that not all "collectivist" cultures of East Asia are the same.²⁷⁷ For example, Koreans distinguish themselves from Japanese in terms of "relatedness,"²⁷⁸ that is, "the extent to which people regard

²⁷² Choi and Kim, 37-38.

²⁷³ Ibid., 35.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 39.

²⁷⁶ Yoshihisa Kashima et al., "Culture, Gender, and Self: A Perspective From Individualism-Collectivism Research," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 925, citing H.C. Triandis, "The Self and Social Behavior in Differing Cultural Contexts," *Psychological Review*, 1996: 509.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 934.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

themselves as *emotionally* related to others."²⁷⁹ According to Kashima and others, the "emotional relatedness" of Koreans manifests itself in "culturally specific concepts" such as "*Cheong* (affection)," "*woori* (we)," or "*shimjung* (sentiments with strong affective connotation)."²⁸⁰ "We-ness" (*Woori* in Korean), according to Sang-Chin Choi and Gyuseog Han, cultural psychologists in Korea, refers to "the mentality operating in a close relationship."²⁸¹ For Koreans, "we-ness" mentality doesn't mean a mere "aggregate of individuals" but signifies the forming of "we-self" which is the extension of "me-self."²⁸² Choi and Han argue, Koreans relate differently with others who belong to or do not belong to "the we-ness category."²⁸³

Jung (or *Cheong*) refers to "an affectionate feeling tone," which functions as "the relational tie and bonding."²⁸⁴ Mostly expressed as "caring mind for others," *jung* is prototypically found in "the interactions among family members" and extends to "general social settings."²⁸⁵ Choi and Han explain the "Korean we-ness" not as "collective entity"

²⁷⁹ Kashima et al., 932 (*italics mine*).

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 934.

²⁸¹ Sang-An Choi and Gyuseog Han, "Shimcheong Psychology: A Case of an Emotional State for Cultural Psychology," *International Journal for Dialogical Science* 3, no.1 (Fall 2008): 206, http://ijds.lemoyne.edu/journal/3_1/pdf/IJDS.3.1.15.Choi_Han.pdf (accessed May, 2, 2011).

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 207. To avoid confusion due to different spellings of *jung* such as *cheong* or *jeong*, I will use *jung* in this dissertation, putting the author's choice for spelling in parenthesis. In a case where a different spelling for *jung* is used in a quote, I will follow the author's choice of spelling by putting *jung* in the parenthesis.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

but as "relational phenomena" since ingroup relationship always operates by *jung*.²⁸⁶ According to Choi and Han, "a collective without *cheong* [*jung*] is a mere amalgamation of individuals."²⁸⁷ *Jung* (or *cheong*), according to Choi and Han, is understood as a relational phenomenon pertaining to we-ness relationships.²⁸⁸ This narrowness of purview in which *jung* operates among Korean relational selves is not much different from Asian interdependent selves' highly selective attention to others or East Asian relational selves' in-group preoccupation. However, Wonhee Anne Joh, a Korean-American feminist theologian, in *Heart of the Cross*, proposes a new interpretation of *jung* (*jeong*) which is broadened to include different others. Joh places *jung* in "the space that touches the self and the other, that boundary"²⁸⁹ or in the "interstitial space" which "is the contact zone of all relationality, even seemingly oppositional ones."²⁹⁰ According to Joh, "*jeong*[*jung*] is the way of being in this space."²⁹¹ The "power of *jeong*[*jung*]," Joh argues, resides in its ability to "complicate and blur the boundary between the self and the other."²⁹² With this ability to dissolve boundaries, *jung* tolerates and even "encourages" differences.²⁹³ Identifying *jung* with the "maternal oneness" or "oceanic

²⁸⁶ Choi and Han, 207.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 214.

²⁸⁹ Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 64.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 62-63.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 63.

²⁹² Ibid., 110.

²⁹³ Ibid., xxv.

feeling" where there is no distinction between object and subject,²⁹⁴ Joh view ourselves basically as "permeable selves."²⁹⁵ On the other hand, Joh is against "relational fusions" which she thinks is "unhealthy" and "disempowering."²⁹⁶ Instead, Joh emphasizes that appropriation of the power of *jeong[jung]* must be balanced by its power to recognize the self within the other while maintaining the distinction of identity.²⁹⁷ "Self inclusion" becomes crucial not only for women's moral (Gilligan) and faith (Slee) development but also in women's embodiment of *jung*.

Shimjung (or *shimcheong*) is a culture specific "emotional state operating in Korean society."²⁹⁸ *Shimjung* literally means "mind" and "affection" and refers to "a mental state of aroused feeling" which is typically observed in "feeling based relationship."²⁹⁹ That is, *shimjung* is triggered

when a specific behavior or event provokes a violation of expectations concerning the self in the we-ness category.³⁰⁰

The arousal of *shimjung*, Choi and Han stress, is not possible in occasional or formal relationships since the "expectation of personalized treatment is untenable in such relationships."³⁰¹ Instead, it occurs among the people sharing "a long history of

²⁹⁴ Joh, 107.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 64.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 127.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Choi and Han, 219.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 218.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 209.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 210.

relationship."³⁰² In "we-ness relationship," typically seen in family members and parent-child dyads, people utilize *shimjung* for "mind-reading activities," trying "to read each other's [*shimjung*] unspoken outwardly and to react accordingly."³⁰³ *Shimjung* operating among we-ness relationship, according to Cho and Han, serves to "enlarge the area of mutual understanding by taking empathy."³⁰⁴ *Shimjung* "functions as a cue for identifying or confirming we-ness and [*jung*]-relationship."³⁰⁵

In a "collective society" of Korea undergirded by "Confucian ideology," where "individuality" is suppressed" for the sake of relational harmony," Cho and Han assert, there arises the natural need for individual member's *shimjung* "to be attended and cared for" in we-ness group.³⁰⁶ Accordingly, *shimjung* serves "to enhance the we-ness" while simultaneously "attending individuality."³⁰⁷ Korean, culture specific concepts such as *we-ness*, *jung*, and *shimjung* point at strong relational potential for achieving the *depth* of relationship. However, it should also be noted that Korean relational selves' embeddedness in we-ness relationships can interfere with achieving increasing the *breadth* of relationship. Achieving the depth of relationship without the breadth, Koreans

³⁰² Choi and Han, 216.

³⁰³ Ibid., 215.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 213.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 214, citing Sang-Chin Choi and Kibum Kim, "The Shimcheong Psychology: Psychological Characteristics, Interactions, and Development of Shimcheong, *the Korean Journal of Psychology* 18, no.1 (1999):1-16 [in Korean].

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 219.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

partially reach the goal of relationship differentiation, the developmental goal of RCT (specifically, as the self-in-relation theory).

A Synthesis

An examination of five psychological theories with relational orientation confirms RCT's view of human development as having relational, emotional, and contextual dimensions. Relationship, emotion, and context are three generative themes according to which the results of my psychological literature review in Chapter Two are organized. Each of these three generative themes has several sub-topics.

Relationship: Human development, specifically women's development is relational development. Relationship as a generative theme includes the following sub-topics: relationship differentiation, self-inclusion, the movement of relationship, relational images, and disconnection.

- * According to Chodorow and RCT (self-in-relation theory), women are more relational than men as long as women mother.
- * According to Slee, women's faith is relational in terms of its contents and process. Slee sees women's faith grow in and through relationships. Relationship is the organizing theme for RCT's and Kegan's theories of human development and Gilligan's moral development. RCT views participating in relationship itself as a way toward human growth and healing. Gilligan deems experiencing relationship itself helpful in developing moral sensitivity.
- * Relationship differentiation is the goal of Kegan's human development, RCT's female development (specifically during the self-in-relation period), and Gilligan's female, moral development and Slee's female faith development.
- * Both Slee and Gilligan stress self-inclusion as important for women's faith and moral development.
- * The interdependent and relational selves in Asia, specifically in Korea, uphold the primacy of relationship and connection while falling short of achieving RCT's goal of relationship differentiation.

* RCT, Slee, and Gilligan view disconnection as positive, as in protecting women's integrity.

* RCT focuses on the *movements* (interactions or flow) of relationship, viewing it as primary resource for growth and healing. Kegan envisions human development as the movements (motions, activities, or process) between self and other. Slee finds the correlation between the movement (interaction or process) of woman's faith interview and the contents of women's faith.

* RCT looks at the *contents* of relationship, that is, relational images, as a crucial clue to healing and growth. Slee examines the diverse contents of women's faith and comes up with three generative themes of alienation, awakening, and relationality. RCT and Slee are in agreement that God images have both oppressing and liberating potentials. According to Rizzuto, God images are relationally significant, in terms of its origin and usage. God images condition people's belief or unbelief.

Emotion: Human development is emotional development. Emotions as a generative theme contains the following subcategories: empathy, mutual empathy, mutuality, self empathy, negative emotions, culture specific emotions.

* For RCT, mutual empathy is the central organizing concept in women's development. Mutual empathy which is understood as mutual impact is RCT's core principle for growth and healing. Self-empathy and empathy across differences are important for the marginalized and disfranchised groups of society.

* According to RCT, empathy needs both affective and cognitive functions. Gilligan's care ethic stresses both affective and cognitive development.

* Gilligan emphasizes that emotion by itself is a legitimate way of knowing morality.

* According to RCT, negative emotions such as anger can function positively.

* For Rizzuto, the power of God images comes from the emotional value it holds for each individual.

* According to Slee, women's self integration must include feelings and bodily experiences.

* Kegan sees human development as emotional development since evolutionary motion, that is, human development itself, makes us experience emotion.

* Culture specific concepts such as *Jung(Cheong)*, *Shimjung*, and *we-ness* testify the intensity of Korean, emotional relatedness.

Context: Human development is contextual development. The third generative theme "context" has the following subcategories: culture, socialization, culture of embeddedness, social criticism, cultural support, social activism, and social transformation.

- * All five theorists I examined are in agreement regarding the shaping power of culture on human development. Culture affects human development. The idea, the psychological is the cultural, connotes the dynamic interaction between the two. This dynamic is seen in RCT, Kegan, and Chodorow.
- * Kegan sees human development as the ongoing interactions between the individuating self and a culture of embeddedness or psychosocial context.
- * For Chodorow, female relationality largely results from socialization.
- * Gilligan and Slee stress self-inclusion for women's faith and moral development in order to fight against sociocultural conventions and religious constraints which demand women to give up self in service of others.
- * According to Slee and RCT, relational images and God images are not value neutral. RCT pays attention to the way the stratified culture distorts human development by providing culture's controlling images which interact with individual's relational images. Slee notices that religious symbols such as negative God images work dysfunctionally for women's faith and life. Rizzuto recognizes culture's influence on the formation and reformation of God images.
- * Kegan stresses cultural supports for human development, in terms of both cultural arrangements and ideology.
- * Koreans are the context-oriented selves whose minds are qualified contextually by others and situations.
- * Chodorow, Gilligan, and RCT suggest that healthy human development requires positive social transformation.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN'S RELATIONAL EXPERIENCE FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The connection between Christian symbol systems and relational distortions has often been made by many feminist theologians. Katherine Zappone, a feminist theologian, criticizes "patriarchal," religious symbols for fostering "unequal power relations" and "social patterns of dominance and oppression."¹ Zappone considers patriarchal, sacred symbols as the "central obstacles" to a life of "interdependence" or "mutual presence" in relation to ourselves, others, the earth, and God.² Patriarchal symbols do harms to women, as Zappone rightly argues,

the exclusion of female experience from sacred symbols not only legitimates male rule of society..., it also creates inner psychic conditions so that men...feel superior to women, and women ...feel less valuable and more powerless in relation to men.³

This chapter examines Christian symbols of God, God's power, and original sin, specifically found in the works of seven Christian, feminist theologians, Sallie McFague, Elizabeth A. Johnson, Anna-Case-Winters, Wendy Farley, Rita Nakashima Brock, Susan L. Nelson, and Wonhee Anne Joh.⁴ The absence of female experience in Christian

¹ Katherine Zappone, *The Hope for Wholeness: A Spirituality for Feminists* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), 30.

² Ibid., 88.

³ Ibid., 30.

⁴ All seven feminists are self-claimed, Christian feminists whose works remain within the boundary of Christianity. This point needs to be made since not all feminists

symbol systems prompted me to study the works of seven, female feminists. It is interesting to see how this incorporation of female, relational experiences influence the dominant and male-biased theological discourses.

Exploring Christian symbols or images, I concentrate on three central, doctrinal categories of God, God's power, and original sin since these three topics appear most influential in women's perceiving themselves and their relationships to God and the world.⁵ After examining the seven feminists' re-envision of images of God, God's power, and original sin, I provide a synthesis of the chapter by comparing and contrasting the works of seven authors. The chapter ends by staging their work in dialogue with RCT, in terms of RCT's central concepts such as controlling images, mutual impacts, and relationship differentiation. This conversation helps clarify the analysis of seven theologians and RCT.

Images of God Reenvisioned by Christian Feminist Theologians

McFague: Reimagining God as Mother, Lover, and Friend of the World

Sallie McFague, a Christian feminist theologian, in *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* suggests a new model of God who relates to the world and

theologians are Christian. For example, Margaret Daphne Hampson claims herself to be "Post-Christian." See Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 42. Her major dissatisfaction with Christianity comes from its patriarchal symbol systems which distort relationships (ibid., 76) and harm women (ibid., 5, 46).

⁵ Some feminists like Zappone distinguish symbol from image. For example, "the symbol 'mother,'" according to Zappone, is separable from "our own image of what 'mother' means. Zappone, 103. She argues that "images shape symbols of the sacred." Ibid. Unlike Zappone, however, I use the terms symbol and image interchangeably without distinction.

humanity in an intimate and mutual manner.⁶ McFague's re-envisioning of God begins with her critique of the traditional Western images of God as "the mighty king and benevolent Father."⁷ According to what McFague calls "the monarchical model,"⁸ God is separate from the world and controls it with the "power as either domination or benevolence,"⁹ and the world is totally dependent on God.¹⁰ Consequently, between God and the world, there is "no sense of mutuality, shared responsibility, reciprocity, and love (except in the sense of gratitude)."¹¹ Moreover, the monarchical God relates "only to the human world,"¹² showing the lack of concern "for the nonhuman world."¹³

McFague re-envisions the God-world relationship by re-conceiving the world as "God's 'body' rather than as the king's 'realm.'"¹⁴ With her body metaphor, the distance between God and the world disappears. God is viewed as relating to the world "intimately" and "intrinsically."¹⁵ This is no small change in perspective since God whose body is the world, by necessity, "cares about the world as one cares about one's

⁶ Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 18-19.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

¹² Ibid., 68.

¹³ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵ Ibid., 70, 78.

body,"¹⁶ and is subject to "bodily contingencies."¹⁷ This God "suffers with the world," while not being able to "wipe out evil" in God's body.¹⁸

McFague adds a second layer to her revision of God by arguing that God is the "Mother," "Lover," and "Friend" of the world.¹⁹ These "personal metaphors"²⁰ denoting "the most basic human relationships"²¹ have several functions. First, they redefine the God-world relationship as that of "fundamental intimacy, mutuality, and relatedness."²² Second, by employing the "personal agential metaphors" of Mother, Lover, and Friend, McFague avoids the pantheism of "reducing God to the world."²³ These personal metaphors allow God to be seen as intrinsically related "with all else that exists as the kind of other, the kind of Thou."²⁴ McFague affirms both transcendence and immanence of God.²⁵ Third, the metaphors of God as Mother, Lover, and Friend of the world clarify the nature of God's power as "the power of love," which "operates by persuasion, care,

¹⁶ McFague, 75.

¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸ Ibid., 75.

¹⁹ Ibid., 78.

²⁰ Ibid., 78-79.

²¹ Ibid., 84.

²² Ibid., 85.

²³ Ibid., 71.

²⁴ Ibid., 83.

²⁵ Ibid., 183.

attention, passion, and mutuality."²⁶ These personal metaphors suggest that seemingly powerless God who cannot get rid of evil has a power, but of a different kind.

McFague's re-envisioning of God naturally brings about the re-envisioning of human beings. When McFague argues for God as Mother, Lover, and Friend of the world, she pictures humanity participating in the God-world relationship "not as individuals but as members of an organic whole, God's body."²⁷ For her, God-human relationship is subsumed in a bigger category of God-world relationship. McFague's metaphors of the world as God's body in which human beings are part and parcel, and God the Mother to whom "all of creation" including human beings relate "impartially" and inclusively,²⁸ make two important statements. First, human beings are not superior to nonhumans since both share the common body of God and are related through the "kinship" relation as the children of Mother God.²⁹ Second, from the perspective of intrinsic and inevitable relationships with the world as God's body and God's children, human beings' "special status and responsibility"³⁰ mean that we have to care for the human and nonhuman world.³¹

²⁶ McFague, 85.

²⁷ Ibid., 86.

²⁸ Ibid., 106.

²⁹ Ibid., 111.

³⁰ Ibid., 76. McFague finds this "special status" of humanity in a fact that we "alone can choose to become partners with God."

³¹ Ibid., 85.

Despite her basic position against anthropocentrism,³² McFague's images of human beings are highly positive and affirmative. Human beings are depicted as "God's partners"³³ "in the care of the world."³⁴ Human partnership with God becomes critical when God relinquishes "the power of control" for the sake of "power of love," calling us the children, lovers, and friends of God.³⁵ The metaphor of God the Lover depicts human beings, along with the world, as "God's beloved" which is in drastic contrast to the "traditional Christian" image of humans as "rebellious sinners."³⁶ Human beings' elevated status, which means special responsibility, reaches its highest point when McFague argues that we all can become "saviors" by joining the work of reuniting "the shattered, divided world."³⁷

Johnson: Reimagining God as Sophia-God

Elizabeth A. Johnson, a Christian feminist theologian, in her work *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* proposes a revision of the triune God as the "Sophia-God"³⁸ who intimately relates to the world. Johnson criticizes that God is traditionally modeled after "the ideal of ruling men within patriarchy" and the

³² McFague, 7.

³³ Ibid., 75.

³⁴ Ibid., 76.

³⁵ Ibid., 85, 135, 174.

³⁶ Ibid., 133.

³⁷ Ibid., 150.

³⁸ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992), 218.

attributes of "solitariness, superiority, and dominating power-over," and therefore God appears "essentially unrelated."³⁹ Johnson's critique of the traditional, patriarchal idea of triune God focuses on "its male imagery and the hierarchical pattern of divine [inner] relationships," both of which are used to support "the patriarchal subordination of women."⁴⁰ For example, "the deeply masculinized symbol of the Trinity," according to Johnson, instills

uncritically held assumptions that maleness is of the essence of the triune God, [which] has the sociological effect of casting men into the role of God while women stand as dependent and sinful humanity.⁴¹

Johnson's revision of God is done in terms of gender and relational pattern of the Trinity. Regarding the gender of the Trinity, she retrieves "three biblical symbols" of "spirit, wisdom (or Sophia), and mother"⁴² and uses them to transform "the male imagery of father and son" into the "female" imagery.⁴³

By employing these three female symbols, each person of the Trinity is re-envisioned as "Spirit-Sophia,"⁴⁴ "Jesus-Sophia,"⁴⁵ and "Mother-Sophia."⁴⁶ Spirit-Sophia is "freely moving, life-giving, nonviolent power."⁴⁷ She "pervades the world to vivify

³⁹ Johnson, 69.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 193.

⁴¹ Ibid., 193.

⁴² Ibid., 82.

⁴³ Ibid., 211.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 150.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 170.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 133.

and renew."⁴⁸ The purview of Spirit-Sophia's action is far reaching as it involves renewing of "the earth,"⁴⁹ "social-political structures,"⁵⁰ and "the life of every person."⁵¹ Jesus-Sophia refers to "Sophia-God who joins the world in the flesh to heal, redeem, and liberate."⁵² "Sophia incarnate Jesus, even in his human maleness,"⁵³ Johnson argues, reveals "the liberating graciousness of God imaged as female."⁵⁴ Mother-Sophia who is the "unoriginate origin" of all⁵⁵ relates to the world in a "genuinely person creating" way.⁵⁶ She expresses "an intrinsic relatedness between God and the world," according to which God "as a mother" is "connected with [the world] in a way that is constitutive of" God's self.⁵⁷ Having "a loving relationality" as "the very essence," God the Mother-Sophia "fosters a vision of connection."⁵⁸

Through her re-visioning of the gender, Johnson defends the transcendence of Sophia-God while emphasizing her immanence. Spirit-Sophia is immanent and transcendent at the same time since she is "essentially related" to and yet "essentially

⁴⁸ Johnson, 169.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁵¹ Ibid., 137.

⁵² Ibid., 169.

⁵³ Ibid., 165.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 167.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 170-71.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 178.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 185.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

free" from the world.⁵⁹ Mother-Sophia's immanence is balanced out by her transcendence when "relationship is a constitutive way in which divine freedom enacts itself."⁶⁰ Sophia-God is "at once essentially free(transcendent) and richly related (immanent)"⁶¹ or "freely relational."⁶² Johnson, citing Peter Hodgson, argues that

just as love signifies the immanence of God in the world, so freedom signifies the immanence of the world in God.⁶³

Johnson also reshapes the relational pattern of the Trinity. The "pattern" of preceding in the classical notion of Trinity is problematic since the Spirit in the third person is depicted, according to its order of procession, as subordinated to "the first(God) and/or second person (Jesus)."⁶⁴ The "rigid hierarchical ordering" eliminates a possibility of "mutual interrelation" which is inherent in the trinitarian structure.⁶⁵ When the Spirit "receives everything and gives nothing," there exists no mutuality.⁶⁶ This "practical inequality" within the Trinity, Johnson argues, reflects and "reproduces" hierarchically arranged "patriarchal structures in church and society."⁶⁷ The subordination of the Spirit to Father and Son, according to Johnson, is especially inimical to women because of "a

⁵⁹ Johnson, 148.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 185.

⁶¹ Ibid., 69.

⁶² Ibid., 186.

⁶³ Ibid., 147, quoting Peter C. Hodgson, *God in History: Shapes of Freedom* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 2007.

⁶⁴ Johnson, 143.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 196.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 196-97.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 197.

symbolic affinity" between "the neglect of the Spirit" and "the marginalizing of women."⁶⁸

To offset the inequality in the trinitarian pattern, Johnson models the triune God after the "relationships of friendship," in which each of three persons of the Trinity exists "in mutuality," not being defined "by their point of origin or rank in the order of procession."⁶⁹ "Sophia-God as a Trinity of friendship"⁷⁰ is structured as if

the triple helix twirls around in a new-ending series of move, which includes human partners ..., toward the fullness of shalom for all creatures, human beings and the earth, especially the most discarded.⁷¹

Sophia-Trinity as the triple helix, according to Johnson, is "neither a straight line nor a self-enclosed circle."⁷² Johnson's model of the triple helix represents the genuine relationality of God within God-self and in God's relation to the world. Johnson's revisions of gender and pattern of the Trinity change the view of humanity and the world. According to the relational pattern of Sophia-Trinity as "the ultimate paradigm of personal and social life," we are "different equals" "in mutual relationship(s)" with other human beings.⁷³ When the paradigm of mutuality is applied to God-human relationship,

⁶⁸ Johnson, 130-31.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 218.

⁷¹ Ibid., 221.

⁷² Ibid. "A straight line" indicates that "divinity proceeds from Father through Son to Spirit, and thence on to the world." "A Circle" refers to "the Spirit closing the divine processions in reference back to the Father."

⁷³ Ibid., 222.

"women and men" are called to be the partners of Sophia-God, joining her work to create, struggle, and hope on behalf of the new creation in the face of suffering and evil.⁷⁴

Sophia-Trinity depicted "in female metaphor" directs our attention to her mystery "as imago feminae" and, thereby, urges women

to grow into the abundance of their human powers, to be creative, self-expressive, and loving together in ways that address human brokenness, violence, and the destruction of the earth.⁷⁵

Johnson's revision of Sophia-God empowers human beings, specifically women, to be active human subjects and responsible God's partners.

Images of God's Power Reenvisioned by Christian Feminist Theologians

Case-Winter: Reimagining God's Power not as Dominion but as Solidarity

Anna Case-Winter, a Christian, feminist theologian in her work *God's Power: Traditional Understandings and Contemporary Challenges* criticizes the traditional images of God and God's power by John Calvin and Karl Barth for being grounded in the "male-biased" understanding of power as "domination and control" and, thereby, inadvertently supporting "oppression, exploitation, and violence."⁷⁶

According to Case-Winter, Calvin understands God essentially as "the sovereign God"⁷⁷ who rules and governs the world with the power that

⁷⁴ Johnson, 244-45.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 215.

⁷⁶ Anna Case-Winter, *God's Power: Traditional Understandings and Contemporary Challenges* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 174.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 81.

God actively exercises everywhere and always, determining not just generalities but all the particularities of world process--even the will and actions of free creatures.⁷⁸

Case-winter argues, Calvin views God's power as "unidirectional, all-determining" and, therefore, "essentially nonsocial."⁷⁹ From this perspective of God's power as all-determining, "genuine *relationship* between God and the world" such as "mutuality" and "reciprocity" are almost impossible.⁸⁰ For example, when a will of human being "is externally determined," humanity's "genuine freedom" is denied, and there is no possibility of genuine relationship or mutuality.⁸¹ Case-Winter asserts that Calvin's doctrines of "creation out of nothing" and "total depravity" further reinforce humanity's "absolute dependence upon the sovereign God," who is "omnipotent" in his power to create and to save.⁸²

According to Case-Winter, the lack of mutuality between God and human beings can be traced back to "the classical world view," that is, "'supernaturalism' which sets God and the world in opposition" and explains God's "perfection" with such concepts as "immutability" and "independence."⁸³ For Calvin, God is not just God the Sovereign but

⁷⁸ Case-Winter, 202.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 92.

⁸¹ Ibid., 68.

⁸² Ibid., 86-87.

⁸³ Ibid., 204-05.

also God the "fatherly Sovereign or sovereign Father."⁸⁴ Calvin's use of personal metaphors of "Father" and "Lord" (or "King"),⁸⁵ according to Case-Winter, posits God and humanity in a relational term and, thereby, narrows the distance between God and humanity placed by the classical, dualistic view of God.⁸⁶ However, despite the connotation of God's loving and justice-serving care, these personal metaphors, Case-Winter argues, can not totally escape the connotation of "controlling power."⁸⁷

According to Case-Winter, Barth's view of God displays his "preoccupation with God's active, all-determining power."⁸⁸ God's decision to create and thereby to be "in relation"⁸⁹ with human beings and be "affected" by that relation is "a self-determining and self-limiting act."⁹⁰ Barth sees this "*voluntary self-limitation*" of God in creation not as "a diminishment but [as] a higher perfection of [God's] power."⁹¹ Barth's triumphal view of God's power is evident when he perceives God's incarnation as "an act of power, a sovereign decision, rather than the "weakness or vulnerability."⁹² Similarly, he sees the "humiliation" of God's suffering on the cross as an act of "freely chosen," "divine-self-

⁸⁴ Case-Winter, 48. According to Case-Winter, Calvin's image of God as King who makes use of "power benevolently-in a fatherly manner- serving 'the public good,'" differs from "a tyrant model." Ibid., 51.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 49, 204.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 230.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 204.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 107-08.

⁹¹ Ibid., 108.

⁹² Ibid., 111.

determination," not as an act of "relinquished control."⁹³ Case-Winter argues, "the apparent vulnerability" seen "in the incarnation and the cross," and its relational potential is eclipsed by "the larger picture of divine power in the mode of domination and control."⁹⁴ The problem in Barth's image of God with all-controlling power is that it allows "no genuine other there for God to love," and "no reciprocity and mutuality" between God and human beings.⁹⁵

Consequently, Case-Winter suggests an alternative way of imagining God and God's power, building on the process theology of Charles Hartshorne and the feminist theologies. Case-Winter re-envision's God's power by employing Hartshorne's definitions of God's power as "'the capacity to be influenced and to influence'" and "'omnipotence' as 'the capacity to be influenced by *all* and to influence *all*.'"⁹⁶ This new perspective on God's power assumes "the freedom/power of all actualities (individuals)," while rejecting the notion of "divine monopoly on power."⁹⁷ God in Hartshorne's process view is perceived as sharing "the same kind of power" with creatures.⁹⁸ God's power is "one power among other powers."⁹⁹

⁹³ Case-Winter, 112.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 113.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 117. Barth redefines human freedom as "obedience to God," which "does not imply self-determination." Ibid., 228.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 211.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 215.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 214. According to Case-Winter's exposition of Hartshorne's theory, power of God differs from power of creature only "quantitatively."

⁹⁹ Ibid., 215.

Case-Winter sees that Hartshorne's understanding of power still lacks the genuine mutuality between God and creatures. His idea of divine "lure as irresistible," she argues, hints the trace of "divine power in the mode of domination and control."¹⁰⁰ To offset this weakness, Case-Winter adopts a feminist image of "God as mother with the world as a child in her womb."¹⁰¹ This image makes it possible "a mutuality of influence" between God(the mother) and the world(a child in her womb).¹⁰² The imagery of "the umbilical cord" accompanying the image of womb stresses "connection rather than control" as well as "internal relation" rather than "external manipulation."¹⁰³ Her model maintains a panentheistic stance since the mutual influence between the mother and child is "asymmetrical."¹⁰⁴ She explains,

the influence of the mother upon the child is "all-inclusive" and "unsurpassable," while the child in her womb is only one aspect of the life of the mother.¹⁰⁵

According to Case-Winter's panentheistic position, God's transcendence is imminent "among us" as the "embracing, grounding, and surrounding" power.¹⁰⁶ By the womb image, God's power is re-envisioned as "life-giving," "world-generating," "cooperating

¹⁰⁰ Case-Winter, 168.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 227.

¹⁰² Ibid., 225.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 224.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 225.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 223-24.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 226-27.

(or synergic)," and "empowering."¹⁰⁷ Case-Winter's model of God's power supports the ethic of "solidarity rather than obedience."¹⁰⁸

Farley: Reimagining God's Power as Compassionate Love

Wendy Farley a Protestant, feminist theologian in her work *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* advocates "a different kind of power, a power that is modeled on a phenomenology of love rather than domination."¹⁰⁹ Traditional model of God's power as "dominion," accompanying "the concept of omnipotence," Farley argues, fails to explain adequately the "goodness" of God¹¹⁰ seen in the creation.¹¹¹ Moreover, God's power as "domination" or "control" falsifies the nature of God's "redemptive power"¹¹² by depriving creatures of "freedom," "dignity," and "responsibility."¹¹³ Consequently, this model "justifies" or "explains" away the problems of evil and suffering.¹¹⁴ Farley suggests "love" as a new "paradigm" or "root symbol" for

¹⁰⁷ Case-Winter, 231.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 231.

¹⁰⁹ Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 13.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 59-61.

¹¹² Ibid., 99-100.

¹¹³ Ibid., 93.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

God's power, believing that love accounts for and defends the "goodness and power of God,"¹¹⁵ even in the presence of "radical suffering."¹¹⁶

In the creation, "creative power of divine love," Farley argues, is expressed through God's permitting "authentic alterity" or "that which is radically other than God."¹¹⁷ God's love, according to her, is "a kenosis (emptying out) of the plenitude of power" since

not only is finitude ontologically other than divine being, but human freedom is also other than the divine will."¹¹⁸

Accordingly, Farley defines God's love as "the power to generate the strange wonder of difference."¹¹⁹ Her view of God's love as "noncoercive," "nonabsolute," creative power¹²⁰ affirms the goodness of creation since "multiplicity and variety enrich and perfect creation."¹²¹ However, by the very same reasons of freedom and diversity, Farley argues, creation or the world is "tragically structured."¹²² Out of diversity, "conflict" ensues.¹²³ Moreover, human "freedom is fragile."¹²⁴ Because of "conflict and fragility"

¹¹⁵ Farley, 97, 98.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 98.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 98.

¹²¹ Ibid., 32.

¹²² Ibid., 35.

¹²³ Ibid., 99.

inherent in God's good creation,¹²⁵ "suffering" and "evil" are both "possible" and "inevitable."¹²⁶ Imagining God's power through the symbol of love, Farley successfully accounts for evil and suffering while defending the goodness of God and God's creation.

In God's relation to the world, God is revealed as "redemptive power."¹²⁷ According to Farley, "compassion" as "a determinate form of love"¹²⁸ signifies God's "power" that "resists evil and restores what is broken."¹²⁹ Compassion as God's redemptive power of love is empowering, interactive, and incarnational. First, compassion is "empowering power."¹³⁰ It is "a power that gives people their own power,"¹³¹ a power "to resist injustice and to fight despair and guilt themselves."¹³² "Mercy," as a particular form of compassion, empowers "the sinner" to "acknowledge" and "purge" their own guilt.¹³³ Second, compassion is "interactive, reciprocal power."¹³⁴

¹²⁴ Farley, 34, 99. Fragility of freedom results from "anxiety" and "unfulfillable," "ambiguous" "desire" as well as the "tragic context" of life itself where conflict is inevitable. Ibid., 34-37.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 107.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 31, 107.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 99.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 97.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 110.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 86.

¹³¹ Ibid., 87.

¹³² Ibid., 88.

¹³³ Ibid., 122.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 111.

Based on the "mutuality and friendship," compassion is "contingent upon response."¹³⁵ It can either "be accepted" or "refused."¹³⁶ Third, compassion is incarnational power. According to Farley, "incarnation" is a "symbol of redemptive love in history."¹³⁷ "The continuing incarnation" of God,¹³⁸ through the "acts of love and compassion,"¹³⁹ is required to fight against "the perennial presence of evil."¹⁴⁰ However, compassion, Farley argues, cannot wipe out evil.¹⁴¹ Rather, it continues to endeavor "to limit, qualify, and heal evil wherever possible."¹⁴² The radicalness of God's redemptive power of love and compassion lies in its persistence. It will never be "overcome by evil."¹⁴³ Empowering, interactive, and incarnational nature of God's redemptive power of love invites us to become free, active, responsible agents in history resisting evil and suffering.

¹³⁵ Farley, 89.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 112.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 113.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 114.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 113.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 127.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁴² Ibid., 127.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 133.

Joh: Reimagining the Cross as the Power of *Jeong*

Wonhee Anne Joh, a Korean-American feminist theologian, in *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* views the symbol of cross as "the power of *jeong*."¹⁴⁴ Joh notices that the cross functions differently for Korean-American Christians, as a sign of both empowerment and disempowerment.¹⁴⁵ Joh agrees with feminist theologians that the traditional understanding of the cross, best represented by "the atonement theory derived from Anselm of Canterbury," has worked negatively "as a tool of domination and subjugation."¹⁴⁶ The Anselmian theory features the "voluntary death" of "innocent," "sinless" Jesus, which was "paid for" human sin to God.¹⁴⁷ Agreeing with many feminist theologians, Joh argues that the Anselmian view of "Divine Victim" ascribes "salvific value to suffering, self-sacrifice, and obedience" and consequently bolsters the victimization of "those who are oppressed."¹⁴⁸

While recognizing such a "disempowering" aspect of the cross, Joh refuses the feminist assertion that "there is absolutely nothing redemptive on the cross."¹⁴⁹ By repudiating redemptiveness of the cross, Joh argues, the feminists also "erase and deny the reality of suffering."¹⁵⁰ Moreover, according to Joh,

¹⁴⁴ Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 111.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

those who are oppressed and repressed are drawn powerfully to the cross because they recognize its subversive power."¹⁵¹

Accordingly, Joh's christology of *jeong* focuses not on the "abusive"¹⁵² but "empowering" "emancipatory" power of the cross for the oppressed.¹⁵³

Joh examines a German Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann's notion of "the crucified God on the cross."¹⁵⁴ She identifies the "traces of radical...love"¹⁵⁵ in Moltmann's idea of "executed" God who "dies and suffers with" those who suffer.¹⁵⁶ However, Joh finds Moltmann's description of God still incomplete. As Moltmann shifts his focus "from Christ's sufferings and abandonment to God crucified on the cross,"¹⁵⁷ Christ's "suffering, utter abjection" is "theologically masked or contained."¹⁵⁸ This eclipsing of Son's suffering by the Father's is problematic since it reveals "a hierarchical relationality" rather than "concrete mutuality."¹⁵⁹ Further, the shift in focus from Son to God obstructs the "transgressive and transformative" power of cross since the Son is the abject who stairs back and mimics and mocks the powers that have rendered him abject.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵¹ Joh, 87.

¹⁵² Ibid., 100.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 79.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 75.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 79.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 82.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 77.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 81.

The insignificance of Son voids "the redemptive power of Christ's suffering for the abject," ¹⁶¹ "those who are powerless, oppressed."¹⁶² According to Joh, Moltmann and feminists fail to notice the redemptive power of Jesus' suffering on the cross, either focusing on God's sufferings rather than Christ's sufferings (Moltmann) or denying Jesus' suffering as being oppressive only (feminists).

Employing Korean, culture-specific concepts of *jeong* and *han*,¹⁶³ Joh argues that the cross embodies suffering and redemptive power. *Han*, Joh explains agreeing with Jae Hoon Lee, has "social/structural" and "psychological" dimensions.¹⁶⁴ Regarding the social dimension, *han* is "a form of suffering" which is "caused predominantly by social, political, and economic oppression."¹⁶⁵ Psychologically, Joh states following Lee, *han* is an expression of each individual's "original wound" and "original *han*," which is "formed during early childhood" and "lies within the negative mother complex."¹⁶⁶

Joh sees the cross as embodying these two layers of *han*. Socio-structurally, *han* of the cross, Joe argues building on Mark Lewis Taylor, refers to "Jesus' execution" by "imperial-religious powers," which was not "salvific" in itself ¹⁶⁷ but, rather, "horrifying"

¹⁶¹ Joh, 83.

¹⁶² Ibid., 82.

¹⁶³ Although being "uniquely Korean, the experience of *han* is universal to those who suffer and are oppressed." Ibid., 20.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 20, citing Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 6.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 74.

and "offensive."¹⁶⁸ The horror of *han* increases when the cross is seen as "psychic wounds of 'original *han*,'"¹⁶⁹ which directs our attention to "Jesus' utter abjection" by his own Father God,¹⁷⁰ and "the ultimate separation between God and humanity."¹⁷¹

However, *han*, Joh argues, does not have a final say since the cross displays Jesus' embodiment of not just the "horror of *han*," but also the "power of *jeong*."¹⁷² *Jeong* is "a Korean way" of understanding "relationality."¹⁷³ Joh redefines *jeong* as "a radical inclusive love."¹⁷⁴ This radical love is prototypically seen "during pregnancy" where "the love of self is fused with the love of other."¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, Joh relates *jeong* to "the semiotic, maternal oneness," which is "pre-object and pre-subject."¹⁷⁶ "The power of *jeong*," Joh asserts, lies in its ability to "blur the boundary between the self and other."¹⁷⁷ Joh re-envision the cross from the perspective of *jeong* which is understood as an inclusive, maternal love. Jesus' execution is viewed as "a risk that one encounters as one

¹⁶⁸ Joh, 104.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 112.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 112.

¹⁷² Ibid., 128.

¹⁷³ Ibid., xxi.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., xxvi.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 107. "The semiotic" connotes "primal oceanic feelings of the maternal and the connective" (ibid., 107), which occurs before "entering into the symbolic" (ibid., 106).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 110

lives in the fullness of *jeong*."¹⁷⁸ More importantly, the cross signifies the semiotic, maternal power of *jeong* "relieving psychic wounds of "original *han*" and, thereby, defeating "the ultimate separation."¹⁷⁹

Joh adopts Kristiva's concept of "the abject" in order to analyze "the dynamics of oppression," specifically in the area of "doctrinal theology."¹⁸⁰ "The abject" refers to "the refused refuse,"¹⁸¹ that is, "something that is rejected from the self but also that which never departs fully."¹⁸² Joh identifies two most repressed abjects in christology: the executed Jesus and "the maternal divine love."¹⁸³ According to Joh, only when the executed Jesus, along with his suffering, horror, or *han*, becomes visible, the cross "mirrors the suffering and the abjection of ourselves."¹⁸⁴ Therefore, the cross signifies

the rerun of the abject those who have been repressed, expelled, persecuted, executed, oppressed all those who have been *han*-ridden.¹⁸⁵

The "subversive" power of the cross ultimately depends on the return of semiotic, maternal *jeong* (love) of God,¹⁸⁶ which "unravels" *han* through "connectedness in the

¹⁷⁸ Joh, 84

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 112

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 92.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 118.

¹⁸² Ibid., 110.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 113.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 114.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 114. Joh contends that "the problem of Christianity" is in its replacing of the "loving and nourishing maternal" God "with a patriarchal God." Ibid., 112.

midst of differences."¹⁸⁷ Joh re-imagines the cross as both suffering (*han*) and redemptive power (*jeong* or *jung*).

Images of Sin Reenvisioned by Christian Feminist Theologians

Brock: Reimagining Original Sin as Original Grace

Rita N. Brock, an Asian-American, Christian feminist theologian, in her work *Journey by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* rejects the Western Christian traditional view of "human condition" as "original sin"¹⁸⁸ and suggests "original grace" as "our truest human character."¹⁸⁹ The view of human beings "in a state of sin," Brock argues, is inadequate since it renders them "powerless"¹⁹⁰ and dependent "upon a power outside [themselves] called God" in order to be saved.¹⁹¹

Brock sees the true condition of humanity in a state of "original grace," which refers to "our primal interrelatedness."¹⁹² Original grace points to our "ontological relational existence," that is, being "constituted by our relationships ontologically."¹⁹³ Erotic power is another image Brock employs to express originally graced human

¹⁸⁷ Joh, 115. Joh clarifies that *jung*[*jeong*] has a limited power. For example, *jung* can heal original *han* (ibid., 115), but it may not remove "systems of oppression" (ibid., 119).

¹⁸⁸ Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1988), 1-2.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹² Ibid., 8.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 7.

existence. Erotic power is, Brock argues, "the fundamental power of existence as-a-relational-process,"¹⁹⁴ "constantly flowing and growing in relationships."¹⁹⁵ Erotic power involves "all aspect of the self," including "our bodies, psyches, and spirits," and connects us "to self, to the body, to others, and to the world."¹⁹⁶ Erotic power is "embodied in all being," as "the incarnate, life-giving power of the universe."¹⁹⁷ Erotic power is "the divine dimension of human existence."¹⁹⁸

Our existence in a state of original grace, Brock asserts, is damaged by "patriarchy."¹⁹⁹ "The patriarchal family" violates original grace by training children to deny "the body," their "physical and emotional needs"²⁰⁰ and to develop the "orientation" toward "dominance and compliance" in "fused relationships."²⁰¹ Moreover, the "broken symbol" system of patriarchy impairs original grace by teaching "the patriarchal father God" and his "abused" son as the Savior.²⁰² These patriarchal symbols promote

¹⁹⁴ Brock, *Journeys*, 41.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 53.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 39-40.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 46.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 13.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 33.

²⁰² Ibid., 55, 56.

"dependence"²⁰³ and severely curtail any possibilities of "interdependence," "mutuality," and "intimacy."²⁰⁴

From the backdrop of human condition as original grace and its brokenness by patriarchy, Brock redefines sin as "damage," arguing that

sin is a sign of our brokenheartedness, of how damaged we are, not of how evil, willfully disobedient, and culpable we are. Sin is not something to be punished, but something to be healed.²⁰⁵

Brock explains "damage" or "brokenness" as "a consequence of our relational existence" since human "vulnerability" turns original grace, "our life source," into "the source of the damage that leads us to sin."²⁰⁶

Damaged original grace and broken "wholeness," Brock urges, must be recovered and healed.²⁰⁷ Healing requires "remembering how we have been damaged" and "facing the past squarely."²⁰⁸ "Honest memory" heals by providing "empowerment and self-acceptance."²⁰⁹ Brock views "anger" as the "crucial first step" toward "self-awareness" in separating women from "fused" relationships in order to exist as "distinct selves."²¹⁰

²⁰³ Brock, *Journeys*, 54, 55, 56.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 54, 56, 57.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 7.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 87.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 17.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

"Self- acceptance" involves "remembering" such feelings as anger as its integral part, and it is an "embodied" experience as long as feelings are grounded in our body.²¹¹

Healing towards wholeness requires "a safe, nurturing environment of remembering."²¹² Brock suggests "Christa/Community" with its "erotic power, as the quintessence of such an environment."²¹³ Christa/Community is "the members of [Jesus'] whole community who generate erotic power."²¹⁴ Christa/Community heals through the actions of remembering its own broken "whole past"²¹⁵ and participating in "relationships of erotic power,"²¹⁶ "mutuality,"²¹⁷ or "connection."²¹⁸ Christa/Community is where "the presence of erotic power" is found "in each individual-in-community"²¹⁹ and "of which Jesus is one historical part."²²⁰ According to Brock, salvation does not depend on Jesus but on "relationship and community as the whole-making, healing center of Christianity."²²¹ Jesus' death was "neither inevitable nor necessary."²²² Instead, Jesus'

²¹¹ Brock, *Journeys*, 23-24.

²¹² Ibid., 22.

²¹³ Ibid., 89.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 68. Christa/Community, according to Brock, is "not limited to the historical Jesus." Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 81, 105.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 81.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 67.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 106.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 63.

²²⁰ Ibid., 69.

²²¹ Ibid., 52.

"tragic" death calls us to "remember him and all other who suffer," and to act on their behalf.²²³

Nelson: Reimagining Original Sin as Original Shame

Susan Nelson, a feminist theologian, in her work *Healing the Broken Heart: Sin, Alienation and the Gift of Grace* redefines the classical doctrine of original sin as "original shame."²²⁴ Nelson's revision of original sin begins with her awareness that "sin takes many forms."²²⁵ For example, "victims and oppressors" sin differently.²²⁶ The sins of oppressors, often named as "pride or control or refusal of vulnerability," do not appropriately account for the experience of "victims of others' sins."²²⁷ From her sensitivity to "situation-appropriate" categories of sin,²²⁸ Nelson reenvision original sin as "a posture of refusal" born out of "the experience of being refused"²²⁹ and "brokenheartedness."²³⁰

²²² Brock, *Journeys*, 94.

²²³ Ibid., 98-99.

²²⁴ Susan L. Nelson, "For Shame, for Shame: The Shame of It All: Postures of Refusal and the Broken Heart," in *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against*, ed. Andrew Sung Park and Susan L. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 84.

²²⁵ Susan L. Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart: Sin, Alienation and the Gift of Grace* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 1997), 42.

²²⁶ Ibid., 42.

²²⁷ Ibid., 43.

²²⁸ Ibid., 42.

²²⁹ Ibid., 43.

²³⁰ Ibid., 50.

Shame, specifically called by Nelson as "toxic shame," is a prototypical example of the sins of victims. Nelson sees "toxic shame" as originating from

the experience of being refused that sediments into postures of protection and refusal that are binding to the human being. Toxic shame is...a state of alienation born when shame experiences have been particularly devastating..., or chronic.²³¹

Toxic shame occurs both on individual and systemic levels. It can be caused by a person's relationship with "very significant other."²³² Or, it can be inflicted on a person through the "shaming tactics" used as "a tool for control" by a system in which the person lives.²³³ The toxic shame originating in "external shaming incident(s)" becomes internalized as a "posture of isolation" defining the person's core sense of self as being "deficient" or "inadequate," especially in the relationships with others.²³⁴ This posture of isolation or "alienation," Nelson asserts, can be considered both "sin" and "the acting out of a broken heart" that is not necessarily a sin but a "sickness."²³⁵ It becomes sinful only when a person "clings to the old way of being" despite "a new possibility" of being.²³⁶

Nelson transforms the meaning of original sin while trying to preserve the traditional language of sin such as "original" and "inherited."²³⁷ Original sin traditionally refers to our "inability not to sin," which is "inherent to our being" and thus "inherited"

²³¹ Nelson, "For Shame," 76.

²³² Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 59.

²³³ Nelson, "For Shame," 76.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

²³⁵ Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 111.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

throughout the generations.²³⁸ However, Nelson locates sin outside of us, "in a historical event" of being refused.²³⁹ Locating sin in "original shaming" events extrinsic to us, Nelson asserts that sin is "not inevitable" but "can be avoided."²⁴⁰ Nelson continues to argue, sin can be "inherited"

through our human vulnerability to being refused, through actual ruptures of the interpersonal bridge that are left unattended, and through the repetition of refusals that are an expression of that unhealed wound.²⁴¹

Sin can be considered inherited or original when we are born "into systems that refused us"²⁴² even before we make "conscious" choices.²⁴³ The "paradox" is that each one of us can still be "responsible" for her inherited sin(s) by being "complicit" in them.²⁴⁴

Nelson demonstrates that there is more than one kind of sin. For example, the sin of victim differs from the sin of oppressor. Moreover, there are no clear demarcation line between the victims and sinners since "those who sin out of a broken heart" are simultaneously "both victims and sinners."²⁴⁵ Consequently, there must be "more than one kind of healing."²⁴⁶ In particular, healing for those who sin out of

²³⁸ Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 69.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Nelson, "For Shame," 84. Nelson sees human "vulnerability" resulting from "our innate relationality." Ibid., 69.

²⁴² Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 109.

²⁴³ Ibid., 107.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 111.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 117.

"brokenheartedness" needs "two modes of healing: from sin, and from ...the broken heart."²⁴⁷ Nelson continues,

a theology that focuses on sin without attending to brokenheartedness deals more with the illness...than with healing the disease.²⁴⁸

Healing from "the disease of the brokenhearted" must involve healing of "an original and unhealed refusal."²⁴⁹ Such healing consists of three processes of "learning to risk" new relationships, "remembering what has been forgotten," especially the original refusals and wounds, and "*re*-membering our selves," "the pieces of ourselves that we have bound to shame and apart from 'us'."²⁵⁰ Those who sin out of brokenheartedness, Nelson asserts, need Jesus who "forgives" sinners and "heals and binds up the brokenhearted."²⁵¹ Accordingly, Jesus' cross is to be viewed as the sign of "the price of human sin,"²⁵² "God's solidarity with the brokenhearted," and "God's [own] brokenheartedness."²⁵³

A Synthesis

The re-envision of major Christian symbols of God, God's power, and original sin by seven Christian feminist theologians results in redefining God-world relationship in more intimate and mutual terms. Humanity is viewed in more positive light. The seven

²⁴⁷ Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 119.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 120.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 121.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 66.

²⁵¹ Nelson, "For Shame," 634.

²⁵² Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 128.

²⁵³ Ibid., 131.

feminists diversify the images of God, naming God Mother, Lover, and Friend (McFague), or Sophia-God (Johnson). All but Farley and Nelson re-imagine God as female, as in Mother God (McFague, Case-Winter, and Joh), Sophia-God (Johnson), and "God/dess" (Brock).²⁵⁴

God's power is re-envisioned as different *kinds* of power such as the power of love (McFague and Brock), compassion (Farley), *jeong* (Joh), or solidarity (Case-Winters). As re-envisioned, God's power works in a way that is non-coercive and yet empowering, which contradicts the traditional image of God's power as domination and control. McFague, Farley, and Joh recognize the limit of God's power which cannot completely eliminate the evil in the world. While being noncoercive, these feminists argue, God's power is still efficacious enough to resist evil and suffering and to heal brokenness. Brock views God's power inherently interior to human beings. Joh locates the power of *jeong* in "the in-between space" of "all relationality."²⁵⁵

The relationship between God and the world/human beings is re-imagined as that of genuine intimacy and mutuality. The image of God the Mother (McFague, Johnson, Case-Winter, and Joh) is adopted to explain how God relates to the world/humanity intimately, intrinsically and internally. Mutuality is the most prominent theme for all feminist theologians who deal with the God-world relationship. Specifically, the image of God the Mother with the world as a child in her womb stresses the mutuality of influence (Case-Winter) or the primal oneness between God and the world (Joh). Johnson emphasizes the mutual relationship between God and the world, and within God-

²⁵⁴ Brock, *Journeys*, xii. Brock says that she prefers the term "God/dess" to "God."

²⁵⁵ Joh, 62-63.

self. Joh's revision of the image of cross corrects the unidirectional and non-mutual power dynamic between God the Father and Jesus the Son, by arguing that *jeong* flows not only from God to Jesus but from Jesus to God and to "the suffering creation."²⁵⁶

Affirming mutuality, McFague, Johnson, and Case-Winter clarify the asymmetrical relation between God and the world, and thereby support the panentheistic stance. Along with God's immanence, these three theologians emphasize God's transcendence, relying on personal, agential metaphors (McFague), God's freedom (Johnson), or all-inclusive and unsurpassable divine relationality (Case-winter). While seeking God's redemptive presence in the world, Farley confirms God's transcendence by identifying it in God's "ungroundedness" and "incomprehensible grandeur."²⁵⁷

Human beings are re-imagined as the active and responsible agents in history (Farley), as God's partners (McFague, Johnson), or in solidarity with God (case-Winter). McFague's image of God the Lover declares humanity as God's beloved, which contradicts the traditional image of humanity as sinners. Nelson refuses to accept human beings as sinners, and locates the origin of sin in human vulnerability, and in individual relationships and systems. Brock's revision of the image of sin affirms the original goodness and grace of human beings.

Weakened Christology is a side effect of the feminist reenvisions. Most feminist theologians reject Jesus as the Savior in Anselmian sense. Brock refuses to acknowledge any one individual, even Jesus, as the Savior. Instead, she argues that Christa/Community, that is, whoever reveals and witnesses God/dess' redemptive work in

²⁵⁶ Joh, 83.

²⁵⁷ Farley, 103.

history is Christ.²⁵⁸ Brock refuses to accept the cross, perceiving it as "the model of abusive relationships."²⁵⁹ Brock perceives the traditional, divine power as being negatively correlated to human power. She identifies accepting saving power of Jesus with human beings' dependence upon the "power outside" and, thereby, relinquishing their own power.²⁶⁰ Therefore, Brock re-envisions sin as damage so as to eliminate human needs to be forgiven and re-imagines the divine power as erotic power which resides essentially within us. To Brock, salvation basically comes from within.

Like Brock, McFague, and Johnson, Joh does not support the special status of Jesus as the Savior. McFague re-envisions God as Lover, and humanity as God's beloved. Shifting the human status from the sinners to God's beloved, McFague eliminates human needs to be saved. Accordingly, McFague redefines salvation as "ongoing healing of the divided body of our world," which requires human participation.²⁶¹ Whoever participates in this work of healing with "the *inclusive* and the *radical*...love for others"²⁶² can be "saviors of the world."²⁶³ McFague views Jesus as the "paradigmatic of God as lover," who "reveals God's passionate, valuing love for the world."²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ Brock, *Journeys*, 68-69.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., xiii.

²⁶⁰ Brock, *Journeys*, 56.

²⁶¹ McFague, 143.

²⁶² Ibid., 150.

²⁶³ Ibid., 152.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 150.

Johnson and Joh view the death of Jesus on the cross as an execution. While refusing to accept the salvific value of Jesus' death, both theologians argue for the strong redemptive power of God working in and through the cross. Johnson re-imagines Jesus on the cross as the "executed victim of state injustice."²⁶⁵ Therefore, his death was neither "necessary" nor "divinely decreed."²⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the cross delivers Sophia-God's "awesome power," the "power of compassionate love, in and through [her] solidarity with those who suffer."²⁶⁷ While viewing Jesus as "the Christ in a paradigmatic way," she asserts that all humanity, specifically those "anointed in the Spirit," are Christ.²⁶⁸ Joh views the cross as an event of execution and Jesus as "one among many participants" in "the way of the cross."²⁶⁹ For Joh, the executed Jesus is never the Savior, but the very abject status of Jesus is what renders the cross stronger in revealing its redemptive power of divine *jeong*, particularly for the marginalized, oppressed, and *han*-ridden people.

Nelson and Farley preserve the language of forgiveness. Recognizing human relational vulnerability, victimization, and culpability by willful denial of new possibilities, Nelson affirms that Jesus forgives and heals. For Farley, the creation is originally good with its tragic structure, which implies no inherent need for redemption. While being tragic, sin is "moral" when human beings "willfully" reject "the stewardship"

²⁶⁵ McFague, 163.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 159.

²⁶⁷ Johnson, 159.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 162.

²⁶⁹ Joh, 73.

which is "the mark of humanity's relationship to God."²⁷⁰ Accordingly, Farley acknowledges human guilt and need for "mercy" or redemption.²⁷¹ Mercy for Farley functions interactively. Mercy works neither "extrinsically" nor "supernaturally," but it "empowers human beings to purge themselves of their guilt."²⁷² Farley preserves the language of mercy while maintaining the mutuality between the human and divine power.

Feminist Theologians in Dialogue with RCT

There are many overlapping interests between relational cultural theory (RCT) and the work of seven feminist theologians. The most noticeable is the shared interest in images and symbols. RCT, in the latest form, shows an intense interest in culture's controlling images as the medium for internalized oppression serving the interests of powerful people. Resonating with RCT's idea of controlling images, all feminist theologians, except Farley, raise the issues about dominant Christian symbols under the influence of patriarchal culture. McFague and Johnson focus on the dominance of patriarchal model, images, or symbols of God. Being critical of "images of the patriarchal family" pervading Christian theology and Christology,²⁷³ Brock searches for a new christological image of erotic power, that is, the Christa/Community. To overcome the male-biased understanding of power as domination, Case-Winter redefines God's power as solidarity by adopting the image of a mother with child in her womb.

²⁷⁰ Farley, 44.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 122.

²⁷² Farley, 122.

²⁷³ Brock, *Journeys*, 4.

Similar to RCT's notion of internalized oppression through controlling images, these feminist theologians make the connections *between* patriarchal images of God, of God's power, of the cross, or of sin, *and* oppressions. For example, Johnson argues that

[an] exclusive speech about God [as male] serves in manifold ways to support an imaginative and structural world that excludes or subordinates women. Wittingly or not, it undermines women's human dignity as equally created in the image of God.²⁷⁴

Brock's revision of human condition as original grace rather than original sin begins with her critical awareness that the traditional image of human beings as sinners does "not lead to enhanced self-acceptance for women."²⁷⁵ Joh's revision of the cross results from her concern about the symbolic dismissal of the abject, oppressed and *han*-ridden people, among whom women are one of the most oppressed and *han*-ridden.²⁷⁶

All seven feminist theologians suggest alternative images or symbols with which to perceive God, world, and humanity, in intimate, mutual ways that contradict the patriarchal ways of relating on the basis of distance and non-mutuality. These feminist efforts to introduce new relational images of intimacy and mutuality coincide with RCT's strategy to introduce discrepant and positive relational images as critical part of human development. While sharing their common concern about the socio-political consequences of controlling images with RCT, McFague and Johnson justify human need for many images of God, based on "the *via negativa*: finding little to say of God with

²⁷⁴ Johnson, 5.

²⁷⁵ Brock, *Journeys*, 8.

²⁷⁶ Korean women are, according to Korean feminists, considered the most oppressed or *han*-ridden in society being called the "Minjung of Minjung." Joh, 21.

certainty"²⁷⁷ or "the incomprehensible mystery of God."²⁷⁸ According to McFague and Johnson, the patriarchal monopoly on the images of God is politically and theologically incorrect.

Similar to RCT's conviction upholding mutuality as the core process of human growth and healing, all feminist theologians view the mutuality as ideal for all relationships, such as God-world (including humans) relationship, relationship within God-self, and human to human relationships. RCT's notion of mutuality does not mean equality. RCT acknowledges the power differential in relationships. Similar to RCT, feminist theologians who support the mutuality between God and the world acknowledge the power differential between the two, trying to preserve God's transcendence and immanence while being firm in their panentheistic stance.

Self-inclusion is a prominent theme for Nelson and Brock. Focusing on human brokenness and the recovery of broken wholeness, Brock and Nelson stress the need of self-inclusion through remembering and re-membering. Brock and Nelson show how RCT's idea of human development, which is relational, emotional, and contextual, can be applied to theological discussions. Brock and Nelson perceive human sin as a relational problem. Emotions play an important part in both Nelson and Brock. Nelson focuses on shaming experience as the origin of brokenheartedness and ensuing sin. Brock emphasizes remembering as an embodied experience using our body and emotions as the instruments. Brock and Nelson view the healing of brokenheartedness occurring through

²⁷⁷ McFague, 40.

²⁷⁸ Johnson, 112.

the community context, for example, by participating in Christa/Community (Brock), in "a receiving community" (Nelson).²⁷⁹

The relationship differentiation is a standard to measure the maturity of human development, according to RCT. Christianity, Brock argues, has been criticized for its "tendency to focus too narrowly on personal sin and redemption."²⁸⁰ In RCT's language of relationship differentiation, Christianity has suffered the lack of breadth in its relational interests. However, the major symbols of Christianity re-envisioned by the seven feminist theologians reveal the expanded breadth of relational interests. McFague is most noticeable with her enlarged relational interest which includes the non-human world. While focusing on the symbolic distortion in Christianity, all feminist theologians display the interests in social-structural sin or systemic oppression such as socio-structural injustice (Farley),²⁸¹ shaming inducing systems (Nelson), sexism (Johnson, Brock, Case-Winter, and Joh), racism (Joh), or imperialism (Joh).²⁸² These interests echo RCT's latest concern for social transformation.

²⁷⁹ Nelson, *Healing the Broken Heart*, 85.

²⁸⁰ Rita Nakashima Brock, "The Greening of the Soul: A Feminist Theological Paradigm of the Web of Life," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 143.

²⁸¹ Farley, 42-44.

²⁸² Joh claims that her Christology of *jung[jeong]* aims at removing "the weight of phallogocentric and imperialistic Christologies." Joh, 101. Joh's Christology is a situation-specific theology, being developed for Korean North American immigrants, who suffer from "racism, sexism, and classism." Ibid., 119. While acknowledging women as "the oppressed among the oppressed," Joh's actual work focuses on racism in the area of theology, for example, the repression of the maternal divine.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN'S RELATIONAL EXPERIENCE FROM AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Chapter Four explores five educational paradigms of representative feminist educators, which are Belenky et al.'s connected teaching, Carol Lakey Hess' conversational education, bell hooks' liberatory teaching, Letty M. Russell's partnering education, and Maria Harris' teaching as the work of religious imagination. These female educators share the feminist interest in women's wellbeing. Belenky et al.'s work focuses on women's knowing. Hess advocates the development of women's selfhood. hooks attempts to achieve the freedom of oppressed people. Russell's work shows favoritism toward the oppressed that subsumes the category of women. Harris offers a re-creation model of teaching by utilizing the experience of women as the representative of all outsiders. Further, all five educators share the feminist interest in genuine relationality or community.

After examining five educational models, I synthesize and extract representative principles of feminist pedagogy. These feminist educational principles will be discussed in light of RCT's core concepts as well as the insights from feminist psychologies and theologies discussed in previous chapters.

Belenky et al.'s Connected Teaching: Finding Women's Authentic Voices

Belenky et al. in their collaborate work *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* suggest that a connected mode of teaching helps women find their authentic voices.¹ According to Belenky et al., women's different ways of perceiving herself, others, and the world are interrelated with their different ways of knowing.² Focusing on self-other interactions, they identify five different types of women knowers, which are silenced or "voiceless," "received," "subjective," "procedural," and constructivist knowers.³

Belenky et al. notice that the women in their study use "a metaphor of voice" to describe their "sense of mind, self-worth, and feelings of isolation from or connection to others."⁴ The following descriptions pay attention to women's sense of voice. Silent women are those who are selfless and "voiceless."⁵ These women suffer extreme "denial of self,"⁶ being disconnected from their inner self and others.⁷ Failing to trust themselves as knowers, silent women are "totally dependent on others" for their knowing,⁸ especially

¹ Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, tenth anniversary ed. (New York: BasicBooks, 1997).

² Ibid., 3.

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 25-27.

⁸ Ibid., 30.

the "external authorities" who are often perceived as "all-powerful."⁹ Silent women are not capable of learning.

Received knowers "learn by listening" to others,¹⁰ the outer authorities who they believe to have "the right answer."¹¹ Having "no voice" or "opinion" of their own, these women only receive knowledge from others but cannot produce their own.¹² Received knowers "look to others even for self-knowledge,"¹³ trying to find their sense of self in "external definitions and roles."¹⁴

Subjective knowers learn primarily by listening to themselves, "a still small voice"¹⁵ or "a nascent self" of their own.¹⁶ Subjective knowers distance themselves from the "remote [often male] authorities" who they conceive as the source of scientific knowledge while pursuing their own "intuitive," personal, and experiential knowledge.¹⁷ Subjective women do not have "public voice" or "public authority" yet,¹⁸ talking only "to themselves."¹⁹

⁹ Belenky et al., 134.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹¹ Ibid., 40.

¹² Ibid., 40.

¹³ Ibid., 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., 134.

¹⁵ Ibid., 68.

¹⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹⁷ Ibid., 71, 74.

¹⁸ Ibid., 134.

¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

Procedural knowers insist using proper "procedures,"²⁰ "objective standards,"²¹ and "reasoned reflection."²² They "'really look' and 'listen hard'" to know, and "speak in measured tones."²³ Among procedural knowers, there are two types who show different orientation towards a "separate" or "connected" way of knowing.²⁴ Separate, procedural knowers learn by using "impersonal,"²⁵ "disinterested reason,"²⁶ for example, through a "formal instruction" of "discipline."²⁷ Separate knowers "speak in public language" in order "to manipulate the listeners' reactions."²⁸ Connected, procedural knowers learn by "experiential logic," "through empathy," in the context of relationships with other people.²⁹ Employing both feeling and thought,³⁰ connected knowers try to "understand other people's idea in the other people's terms."³¹ Procedural knowers have no "authentic

²⁰ Belenky et al., 95.

²¹ Ibid., 94.

²² Ibid., 88.

²³ Ibid., 94.

²⁴ Ibid., 102. Belenky et al. argue that "separate and connected knowing are not gender-specific," but "gender-related." Ibid. For example, some women in their study show the use of both ways of knowing.

²⁵ Ibid., 109.

²⁶ Ibid., 110.

²⁷ Ibid., 115.

²⁸ Ibid., 108.

²⁹ Ibid., 115.

³⁰ Ibid., 121.

³¹ Ibid., 124.

or unique voice" of their own in a sense that they seek authority "within systems"³² or in "agreed-upon ways for knowing."³³

Constructivists are the most mature type of knowers among Belenky et al.'s five positions. Constructivist women "include the self" in the process of knowing and, accordingly, are "passionate knowers."³⁴ Constructivist women engage in "real talk," "speaking with and listening to others while simultaneously speaking with and listening to the self."³⁵ In the real talk, "reciprocity and cooperation" prevail, with no possibility of "domination."³⁶ Constructivists regard equally "the needs of the self" and "the needs of the others."³⁷

Belenky et al.'s study shows that the development or underdevelopment of self or voice influences the women's capacity to know. Depending on self-other dialectics, knowing for women is primarily relational. Further, Belenky et al.'s study reveals the contextual nature of women's knowing. Contextual factors profoundly affect the formation and transition of each type of female knowers. For example, family histories or "family patterns" are the defining factor for each type of female knowers.³⁸ Many

³² Belenky et al., 127.

³³ Ibid., 134. For example, separate procedural knowers find authority in "reason" (ibid., 107), and connected procedural knowers in "commonality of experience" (ibid., 118).

³⁴ Ibid., 141. According to Belenky et al., passionate knowers "enter into a union with that which is to be known."

³⁵ Ibid., 145.

³⁶ Ibid., 146.

³⁷ Ibid., 151.

³⁸ Ibid., 156.

silent women in Belenky et al.'s study experienced the parental "violence," instead of "conversation."³⁹ The women in the received phase acquiesced the "permanent," unequal relationships with their parents⁴⁰ as typically seen in "'one-way' conversations" from parents to children.⁴¹ Subjectivist women's family histories show "one-way-talk" where daughters are talking and parents are listening.⁴² In cases of procedural and constructivist knowers, parents and daughters "had an equal say," each speaking as well as listening.⁴³ The mothers of these women had the "strong, clear voices of their own,"⁴⁴ and none of their fathers "abandoned the father-daughter relationships altogether."⁴⁵

According to Belenky et al., transition to more mature position of knowing occurs in and through the relationship with others. For example, received knowers' transition to subjectivism often coincides with "crisis of trust in male authority."⁴⁶ The received knowers in transition seek answers by listening and talking with "maternal" authorities who share similar "firsthand experience" as women.⁴⁷ Subjectivist women's transitioning to procedural position can be helped by "benign but knowledgeable" authorities.⁴⁸ A

³⁹ Belenky et al., 158-59.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 165.

⁴¹ Ibid., 164.

⁴² Ibid., 168.

⁴³ Ibid., 176.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 60, 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 93.

woman becomes constructivist by turning to no other but herself, through "a thoroughgoing self-examination."⁴⁹

Belenky et al. argue that women primarily "learn in relationship," by struggling with "life demands."⁵⁰ Nonetheless, Belenky et al. suggest a model of teaching in the classroom. Belenky et al's "connected teaching" presupposes that students own "latent knowledge."⁵¹ "Through stretching and sharing," the connected class "transforms" students' latent knowledge, their subjective truths, into "publicly available" ones.⁵² The connected teacher, what Belenky et al. call "a midwife-teacher," helps students "articulate and expand their latent knowledge."⁵³ Belenky et al. ground connected teachers' authority "not on subordination but on cooperation."⁵⁴ Connected teaching aims at helping women advance "toward community, power, and integrity,"⁵⁵ and "their own authentic voices."⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Belenky et al., 136.

⁵⁰ Ibid., xi.

⁵¹ Ibid., 217.

⁵² Ibid., 222-23. Stretching in connected class must be "mutual stretching" where each individual "stretches her own vision in order to share another's vision." Ibid., 119.

⁵³ Ibid., 217.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 227.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 228.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 229.

Hess' Conversational Education: Caring for Genuine Relationships in and through the Communities of Faith

Carol Lakey Hess, a reformed feminist educator, in her work *Caretakers of Our Common House: Women's Development in Communities of Faith* takes up the issue of "dehumanization" of women and offers an alternative educational model to promote women's self-development in and through "caring" communities of faith.⁵⁷ Through her analysis, Hess locates two major parties responsible for women's dehumanization, which are "girl-destroying culture"⁵⁸ and "girl-denying" "mainline churches."⁵⁹

Churches or communities of faith, Hess argues, obstruct women's development by promoting the "male-biased" theologies of sin,⁶⁰ of which Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of sin as pride is an quintessential example, and "Christian spiritual disciplines" which are influenced by the "theologically driven censures on pride"⁶¹ such as "a humility-based spirituality."⁶² Hess, drawing on feminist critiques, asserts that the understanding of sin as pride renders "self-abnegation" "a virtue."⁶³ Theologies and spiritual practices that promote "self-sacrifice"⁶⁴ or "self-denial" are harmful especially to women since

⁵⁷ Carol Lakey Hess, *Caretakers of Our Common House: Women's Development in Communities of Faith* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 246.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 122, 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 50, 53.

⁶¹ Ibid., 42.

⁶² Ibid., 43.

⁶³ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

the needed assertion of the already lowly may be thwarted and necessary voices silenced.⁶⁵

Hess stresses that the exaltation of self-abnegation impairs not just women's assertive voices but the "prophetic and dissenting" voices of individuals and communities, and thus brings about "prophetic torpor," that is, the diminished capacity "to care deeply about the world and others in it."⁶⁶

Building on developmental psychologies of Robert Kegan and Carol Gilligan, Hess elucidates the problematic nature of theology of sin as pride in the broader cultural context. Hess points out that cultural expectations for femininity such as "submissiveness, passivity, and dependence,"⁶⁷ when combined with the theological teachings that champion "self-sacrifice and nonassertiveness,"⁶⁸ prohibit "the emergence of a confident self in women."⁶⁹ For a woman to grow towards the confident self, she needs self-empowerment.⁷⁰ For a female self to reach the phase of "full maturity," what Kegan calls "inter-individuality" represented by "a fully developed sense of self and others that is interdependent,"⁷¹ a construction of "a whole, complete, and prior self" is prerequisite.⁷²

⁶⁵ Hess, 43.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 66.

⁷¹ Ibid., 84.

⁷² Ibid., 85.

Similarly, "self-inclusion," Hess asserts building on Gilligan's ethic of care, becomes an imperative for women to grow into full maturity, what Gilligan calls the phase of "truth," authentic caring, or "genuine relationality,"⁷³ which refers to the ability to attend "to self as well as other."⁷⁴ Moral maturity for women, Hess argues, can only be acquired by repudiating "the conventional understanding of female goodness," and "a 'self-assertion is sin' theology" as "an additional obstacle" for Christian women.⁷⁵

Theological teachings of the churches can function as the powerful forces in shaping female persons because they collaborate with culture. Hess' interest as a religious educator is far reaching to cover the whole area of culture. She defines North American culture as "girl destroying culture" that divests women of "freedom and choice."⁷⁶ Culture, according to Hess, shapes girls into the culture's "expectations for femininity,"⁷⁷ through implicit and explicit "gender training,"⁷⁸ "gender coding,"⁷⁹ "cultural norms of feminine behavior,"⁸⁰ "sex-role stereotypes,"⁸¹ "educational practices," "parenting practices."⁸² Girl-destroying culture manifests itself in and through "the

⁷³ Hess, 93, 94.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 94.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 131.

⁸¹ Ibid., 132.

⁸² Ibid., 127.

community life dynamics,"⁸³ particularly in "family dynamics" as "an extension of the larger cultural arena."⁸⁴

Culture and communities of faith work as the joint forces in depriving girls and women of their selves, voices, and power. An ironic twist, Hess argues building on Gilligan, is that depriving women of their selves leads to depriving others "of true relationality and community."⁸⁵ The diminishment of women's selfhood results in the diminishment of "community life as a whole."⁸⁶ Therefore, Hess sees an "urgent need" to foster female selfhood or its "legitimate voice" for the purpose of "genuine relationality."⁸⁷ Hess urges the communities of faith, including families, to "intentionally" work⁸⁸ to support women's "shattering of cultural conceptions of femininity" and their growing into authentic selfhood, voice, power.⁸⁹

Hess suggests that "conversational education" is not a curriculum but a layout of what the church or community of faith would be like as it functions to provide an "educational environment" or "educational ethos that promotes genuine relationality."⁹⁰ Hess builds her idea of conversational education on the notion of caring while significantly redefining it. Caring is to be understood as "everyone's responsibility," no

⁸³ Hess, 125.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 36, 53.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 120, 88.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 183.

longer "simply women's."⁹¹ More importantly, caring must sustain both "connection" (or "affiliation") and "differentiation" (or "individuality"). Accordingly, caring no longer is identified with "self-abnegation."⁹²

Hess further argues that three kinds of caring should coexist: "empathetic caring," "conversational caring," and "prophetic caring."⁹³ "Emphatic caring" underscores women's needs of "self-empathy" because in order to foster "mature empathy," women must "build up [their] sense of self" first.⁹⁴ Hess is concerned about the "overemphasis on empathetic caring"⁹⁵ and stresses that "empathy, even when it is mature, does not stand alone."⁹⁶ "Conversational caring" refers to a caring through careful "listening *and* generous... sharing,"⁹⁷ which requires the mutuality in relationships. Self-abnegation hinders a possibility of conversational caring.⁹⁸ "Prophetic caring" means "caring enough to confront."⁹⁹ In conversational caring, according to Hess, empathetic caring must be joined with prophetic caring.¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ Hess, 118.

⁹² Ibid., 120.

⁹³ Ibid., 96-120.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 120.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 103.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 111.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 110.

Conversational education, Hess argues, needs two types of caring, the one representing "connection" or "empathetic voice," and the other representing "differentiation," "separation," or "prophetic voice."¹⁰¹ Conversational education is characterized by "hard dialogue and deep connections with one another,"¹⁰² "with tradition,"¹⁰³ and "with God."¹⁰⁴ These three kinds of conversations needs to maintain two types of caring. For example, when dialoguing with one another, women's ideas from their "ordinary reality" should not be "immediately" dismissed by "separate knowers."¹⁰⁵ To do so is a violation of connection. Contrarily, women shouldn't obstruct "conflict" in their attempt to sustain "false connections."¹⁰⁶ An ideal form of conversation, called "real talk," must hold both "separation and connection."¹⁰⁷ For real talk to occur, a community of faith must carry out the dual tasks of becoming "a 'community of support' and a 'community of inquiry'."¹⁰⁸ Conversing with tradition, specifically with the Bible, requires both empathetic caring and "prophetic caring" that is expressed in the form of "talking back to the biblical material."¹⁰⁹ Hess opposes "a feminist selective reading of the Bible" since it implies "that the Bible only speaks to us,

¹⁰¹ Hess, 182, 183.

¹⁰² Ibid., 184.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 191.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 209.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 186.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 187.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 194.

we do not speak back to it."¹¹⁰ Hess affirms our need to have "real-talk with God," by protesting against, questing, or grappling with God.¹¹¹

Hess proposes "caretaking leadership," "the leadership that displays "a complex blend of prophetic (visional), empathetic, and conversational caring."¹¹² Caring leadership must name one's passion or vision. Naming and sharing a caretaking leader's prophetic vision must be done in the "'connected' forms of passionate assertion," through "empathy,"¹¹³ for example, by "sparking back talk" without forcing it.¹¹⁴ Caring leaders "foster and moderate democratic processes"¹¹⁵ for "theological reflection and decision making."¹¹⁶

hooks' Liberatory Classroom: Teaching for Freedom in and through a Classroom Community

bell hooks a feminist, critical educator in her work *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*¹¹⁷ criticizes education for working as an instrument of domination and suggests an alternative model of education that aids the liberation of marginalized people by the intentional acts of creating and sustaining

¹¹⁰ Hess, 194.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 210-12.

¹¹² Ibid., 215.

¹¹³ Ibid., 229.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 230.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 245.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 241.

¹¹⁷ bell hooks, *Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

classroom communities. Adopting a critical lens of "social antagonism,"¹¹⁸ hooks defines the culture of United States as "a culture of domination"¹¹⁹ where those in power, "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,"¹²⁰ oppress the people "on the margins."¹²¹

According to hooks, the culture of domination employing the politics of racism, sexism, and classism reproduces itself through education.¹²² For example, in a classroom, "materially privileged class experience" is universalized as the single norm or only mode of interaction.¹²³ This leads to "silencing" of students from under-privileged class¹²⁴ and reproduces "a privileged class values."¹²⁵ In the field of feminist scholarship, hooks asserts, "the experience of white women" is generalized to represent "all female experience,"¹²⁶ reproducing "the servant-served paradigm" between white and black feminist scholars.¹²⁷

hooks asserts that "no education is politically neutral"¹²⁸ because of its role "to reinforce domination."¹²⁹ She further argues that education is "necessary for

¹¹⁸ hooks, 31.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹²¹ Ibid., 30.

¹²² Ibid., 39.

¹²³ Ibid., 181.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 180, 181.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 120-21.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 103.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 37.

liberation"¹³⁰ and must function as "the practice of freedom."¹³¹ In particular, hooks sees "the classroom" as "the most radical space of possibility" for liberation.¹³² Freedom from the culture of domination occurs through deliberate acts of "creating and sustaining a learning community" in the classroom.¹³³ A classroom community hooks envisions is a place where "democratic" values are continually affirmed by every individual participant equally practicing their own voice, power, and influence.¹³⁴ hooks locates the power of the democratic classroom, what she calls "liberatory classroom," in "the power of learning process, the work we do to establish a community."¹³⁵ What makes a classroom liberative is pedagogical classroom "process"¹³⁶ or "structure."¹³⁷ The liberatory classroom, hooks argues, does not depend on "more radical subject matter."¹³⁸

hooks names several classroom practices that are critical in building up classroom communities. First, valuing "each individual voices"¹³⁹ creates the classroom

¹²⁹ hooks, 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.

¹³² Ibid., 12.

¹³³ Ibid., 8.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 39, 42, 152, 189.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 144.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 150, 162.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 148.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 40.

communities where students "feel free to talk" and even able to "talk back."¹⁴⁰

Approaching an issue of voice politically, hooks asserts that "race, sex, and class privilege" empower some voices but disempower the other voices.¹⁴¹ For example, students from "a nonmaterially privileged background" are alienated from the classroom discussions simply by their "speech patterns" or "points of reference."¹⁴² Therefore, a pedagogical structure conducive to classroom communities requires teaching the "students *how to listen, how to hear one another*."¹⁴³

Second, "sharing experiences and confessional narratives" helps establish classroom communities.¹⁴⁴ hooks sees the use of "the classroom experiential knowledge" strengthening learning experience.¹⁴⁵ The use of experience "empowers students" when the subject matter "directly relates to their experience."¹⁴⁶ But experience, hooks cautions, can also disempower or "silence" students¹⁴⁷ when it is the only way of knowing. Accordingly, hooks suggests that experiential knowing "coexist with other ways of knowing."¹⁴⁸ "Experience, confession and testimony," hooks argues, are

¹⁴⁰ hooks, 42.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 185.

¹⁴² Ibid., 181.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 150.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 186.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 84.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 87.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 84.

"relevant ways of knowing."¹⁴⁹ Personal experience and narratives offer a "rich" and powerful way of knowing, especially when used in combination with "analytical"¹⁵⁰ or "academic information."¹⁵¹

Sanctioning experience as a relevant way of knowing has a strong political implication. hooks pays attention to how theory is used "as an instrument of domination"¹⁵² producing and perpetuating "class hierarchy."¹⁵³ One example is black women's silence because of their lack of theory¹⁵⁴ and white women's "hegemonic hold on feminist theory."¹⁵⁵ But such power dynamic, hooks argues, can be reversed when "personal testimony, personal experience" are used as "the base" in making feminist theories.¹⁵⁶ The use of experience in the classroom has one more function. That is, "telling experience" connects "facts or abstract constructs to concrete reality,"¹⁵⁷ and "the world outside" to "the inside world of the academy."¹⁵⁸ The experiential knowledge must

¹⁴⁹ hooks, 89.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 148.

¹⁵² Ibid., 65.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 66.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 86.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 195.

be incorporated into the classroom. hooks' idea of "holistic" education,¹⁵⁹ pursuing "knowledge about how to live in the world," heavily depends on it.¹⁶⁰

Third, bringing "emotions" and body to the classroom strengthens the class communities.¹⁶¹ Emotions such as "passion"¹⁶² and "excitement," hooks asserts, can "coexist with serious intellectual and/or academic engagement."¹⁶³ hooks gives practical advices "to create exciting learning process," to list a few, being "flexible" with teaching agendas,¹⁶⁴ and being "deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices" while maintaining root discussion as the body.¹⁶⁵ Bringing the "whole" persons, not "disembodied spirits," to the classroom ensures that classroom learning transforms the students' "habits of being and ways of living outside the classroom."¹⁶⁶

Recovering erased bodies, including emotions, back to the classroom is a political act. Disembodiment leads to the erasure of particularities of students such as race, gender, class, and their agencies in history. Accordingly, the recovery of body in the classroom disturbs "a culture of domination."¹⁶⁷ In addition, teachers' embodied presence

¹⁵⁹ hooks, 14.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 155.

¹⁶² Ibid., 155.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 194.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 139.

in the classroom breaks apart the notion of teacher "as omnipotent all knowing mind."¹⁶⁸

This change in perception on teachers implies that the teacher-students dynamics in the classroom also change. Striving for healing of the body/mind split,¹⁶⁹ education becomes a "healing" enterprise,¹⁷⁰ and teachers become the "healers."¹⁷¹

To build up class communities, hooks asserts, teachers need to mutually engage the classroom practices with students. Both parties share mutual responsibilities for the classroom process.¹⁷² Mutually engaging in the learning process, not just students but the teacher will "grow" and are "empowered."¹⁷³ hooks does not negate teachers' power as negative. Rather, she affirms the teachers' power to significantly influence the students' lives,¹⁷⁴ while being honest about the teachers' fear of abusing or losing power in the classroom.¹⁷⁵ Being realistic about the power teachers hold, hooks asks them to function as the "role models" for their students.¹⁷⁶ Overall, hooks perceives teacher's job as very "demanding."¹⁷⁷ For example, to model the incorporation of experience and body in the

¹⁶⁸ hooks, 138.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 175, 191.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁷² Ibid., 152, 205, 206.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 21, 152.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 206.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 187, 188.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 206.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

classroom, teachers need to ensure "their own well being" through "self-actualization"¹⁷⁸ and through healing from the separation of body and mind.¹⁷⁹ hooks further elevates teachers' vocation as "sacred," caring "for souls of students" beyond the intellectual.¹⁸⁰

Russell's Partnering Education: Educating for Partnership through Critical Participation in Communities of Faith

A feminist theologian Letty M. Russell's "pedagogy for partnership,"¹⁸¹ elaborated in her interdisciplinary work of *Growth in Partnership*, builds on a conviction that God in Jesus Christ chooses to be "partner with us in New Creation,"¹⁸² inviting and empowering us to become "partners with God, ourselves, and one another."¹⁸³ Partnership, according to Russell, is our "new order,"¹⁸⁴ "new reality,"¹⁸⁵ or "new focus,"¹⁸⁶ which is "already" given by God in Christ, but its "full expression" is "not yet" realized.¹⁸⁷ We already are and are still "becoming partners in all the relationships of our

¹⁷⁸ hooks, 15.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 199.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁸¹ Letty M. Russell, *Growth in Partnership* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 152.

¹⁸² Ibid., 25.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 18, 20, 22.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 20, 23.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 22, 29.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 23.

lives."¹⁸⁸ Partnership is "a gift" by God, but it still requires "continuing commitment" on our part because of "the 'already/not yet' character of New Creation."¹⁸⁹ Partnership means to have "living relationships" with "God, persons, and creation," which are characterized by the patterns of "interdependence," "equal regard," and "mutual acceptance"¹⁹⁰ as well as by the "qualities of love, faithfulness, and justice."¹⁹¹ Russell's pedagogy for partnership aims at helping people move toward "full partnership," "interdependence," or "mutuality."¹⁹²

People, according to Russell, learn to be partners by "becoming partners with one another"¹⁹³ or "by participation in partnership."¹⁹⁴ "Partnering education" occurs "in any community" where there are "the gifts of partnership between people."¹⁹⁵ The importance is "not the setting" itself but "the center of the relationship" of communities, which is "Christ."¹⁹⁶ Community members learn to be partners "in the sharing of community,"¹⁹⁷ especially in sharing "Christ's ministry or service."¹⁹⁸ Russell offers a "holistic" view of educational ministry by arguing that

¹⁸⁸ Russell, 23.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁹² Ibid., 152, 83, 79.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 50.

ministry is educational when it offers the possibility of growth in ability to serve others.¹⁹⁹

Russell considers all aspects of ministry as potentially educational.

Russell envisions partnering education as an "organic,"²⁰⁰ "lifelong process of becoming partners,"²⁰¹ which relies on "social interaction between persons."²⁰² Viewing "the whole church" as the "context" of education,²⁰³ Russell stresses the growth and maturity of the church itself in order to function as a community of "nurturing" and "partnering."²⁰⁴ Russell offers "a typology of *church styles*" that represents four different "ways of developing toward partnership"²⁰⁵ such as "interdependence," "selfdependence," "counterdependence," and "dependence."²⁰⁶ Each style or phase of the typology displays "changing understanding of social reality and changing style of action."²⁰⁷ According to Russell, the phase of church is not determinative as long as education begins "*where persons are*."²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁸ Russell, 59.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 55.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 59.

²⁰² Ibid., 55.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid..

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 56.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 79.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

On the other hand, partnering education cannot be acquired merely by "a process of enculturation or socialization,"²⁰⁹ which often perpetuates "status quo" and "oppression."²¹⁰ Instead, it requires "a process of liberation or exodus," helping people become the partners in "God's liberating action."²¹¹ Russell adds a dimension of "freedom" and thereby a political sensitivity to her partnering education.²¹² Simply being nurturing communities is not enough. Partnering communities are to be nurturing "communities of freedom."²¹³ To ensure the goal of liberation, Russell argues building on liberation theologies, "critical reflection and action" are important.²¹⁴ Russell renders it "crucial" to develop "a critical consciousness," that is, an ability to "see all of reality from the perspective of critical commitment to Christ and to the reality of God's new Creation."²¹⁵ To make sure, partnering education pursues not only critical consciousness but "critical and committed" consciousness,²¹⁶ the critical consciousness accompanied by committed action. Moreover, the theological reflection of communities of freedom, Russell asserts, requires not only the "critical understanding of reality" but also "hope-filled discernment of the signs of liberation" since critical consciousness alone is not

²⁰⁹ Russell, 72.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 71.

²¹² Ibid., 72, 73.

²¹³ Ibid., 63.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 73.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 75.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 58, 73, 74.

enough to draw out the liberative action from those experiencing the oppression.²¹⁷ The oppressed people need to find hope "in anticipating New Creation."²¹⁸ Therefore, a nurturing community of freedom is "a community of anticipation."²¹⁹

Russell asserts, critical and hope-filled theological reflection should be "biblically based,"²²⁰ continually "questioning our actions and those of society *in the light of the biblical message* of New Creation."²²¹ Russell argues that biblical messages are "authoritative witness" to God as long as they are prophetically interpreted.²²² Consequently, in nurturing communities of freedom and anticipation, all aspects of church's ministry, including "educational," "theological," and "prophetic" ministries, work to provide a "space where shared action and reflection on God's promise" for New Creation or full partnership take place.²²³

In addition to action-reflection structure, Russell offers several practical strategies that *intentionally* add to the partnering education as an organic, communal process.²²⁴ For example, Russell's notion of "third thing" refers to "common agenda" or "task."²²⁵

²¹⁷ Russell, 98.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 103.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 97.

²²⁰ Ibid., 87.

²²¹ Ibid., 97 (*italics mine*).

²²² Ibid., 97. "Prophetic interpretation," according to Russell, is characterized by "the 'right word' for the 'right context'" (ibid., 96), meaning "finding our analogies to the present" (ibid., 97).

²²³ Ibid., 104.

²²⁴ Ibid., 80.

²²⁵ Ibid., 56.

Third thing is a way to *intentionally* offer the opportunities "for unequals to make a mutual commitment about something they care about equally."²²⁶ The oppressed "learn to be partners by sharing tasks," "common action," or "third thing."²²⁷ For the oppressors, third thing is a way to "discover solidarity with (oppressed) others."²²⁸

One noticeable principle in Russell's strategies for nurturing partnership is to provide "caring and challenge" at once.²²⁹ Stimulations for "cognitive conflict" should be offered in the context of "a community of support."²³⁰ Cognitive conflict is promoted by one's exposure to "other perspectives" and to "variety of roles and relationships" "in a wider context," or exposure to "significant others who model mature value" and think "at a higher' stage."²³¹ In addition, cognitive conflict is crucial for the growth of oppressors and survival of the oppressed. For the growth in partnership, the oppressors need to experience "cognitive dissonance" and "culture shock" by exposing themselves to "situations of oppression and need."²³² For "hope" and "survival," the oppressed need to cultivate "advent shock," the "maladjustment with present because of the longed-for future," according to Russell.²³³

²²⁶ Russell, 79.

²²⁷ Ibid., 154, 155.

²²⁸ Ibid., 133. Russell admits the "ambiguity" of the term oppressors since people can be "oppressed and yet are also oppressing others." Ibid., 121.

²²⁹ Ibid., 75, 134.

²³⁰ Ibid., 75, 80.

²³¹ Ibid., 75, 54.

²³² Ibid., 130.

²³³ Ibid., 153, 154.

In a nurturing community of freedom and anticipation, all members teach and learn from one another. There exist no "dichotomies" of "teachers/students" or "clergy/congregation."²³⁴ In this community of learning, teachers are "taught by their students," as suggested by Russell's concept of "temporary inequality."²³⁵ All persons grow in partnership by "shifting around roles" and "sharing leadership."²³⁶ Teaching often takes place as a form of "mutual engagement"²³⁷ or "cooperative teaching project"²³⁸ where "more and more persons" contribute with their "particular skills and knowledge."²³⁹ "Laity and non-professional theologians" are the "resources in theological education."²⁴⁰ "Do-it-yourself variety" is encouraged. One critical point in designing educational opportunities is to "fit the particular gifts and needs for the growth in that particular group of people."²⁴¹

Harris: Teaching as the Work of Religious Imagination

Maria Harris, a feminist, religious educator, in her work *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching* offers an "alternative" paradigm for teaching "as a work of religious imagination," refusing to view teaching as "a matter of

²³⁴ Russell, 59.

²³⁵ Ibid., 60.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 107.

²³⁸ Ibid., 79.

²³⁹ Ibid., 108.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 106.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 108.

content and method" or as a matter of "technique."²⁴² According to Harris, teaching builds on "religious imagination,"²⁴³ which refers to imagination governed by three most recognized religious qualities, the "mystery, the numinous, and the mystical."²⁴⁴ In teaching, these three religious qualities guide our imagination to perceive ourselves as the "mysteries" who are "made in the image of" "God, the Incomprehensible Other,"²⁴⁵ to find "the presence of divinity" in "anything and everything," and to believe that "all things are related."²⁴⁶

Envisioning teaching as an act of religious imagination, Harris defines teaching as "the incarnation of subject matter that leads to the revelation of subject matter."²⁴⁷ This definition is a key to decipher what Harris means by teaching as religiously imaginative act. For Harris, immediate concern for teaching is "the creation of form."²⁴⁸ By "form," she means the "shape," "design," or "embodiment" of subject matter.²⁴⁹ "Incarnation" is a specific term she uses to refer the creative work of "giving-form-to, giving-flesh-to subject matter."²⁵⁰ Painfully aware of the reality of "form-poverty" or "form-

²⁴² Maria Harris, *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 24, 25.

²⁴³ Ibid., 10.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 13.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 167.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 42.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 42, 47, 61, 169.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 42.

bankruptcy,"²⁵¹ Harris asserts that the "central attention" in teaching enterprise must be given to form.²⁵² This new focus on form is stressed by her threefold repetition, "to take form seriously, to take form as a starting point, and to take form into account."²⁵³

Harris argues for "manifold embodiment and a plurality of incarnations," believing that human beings possess and thus require "variety of ways of knowing" and that the subject matter itself claims "a repertoire of forms."²⁵⁴ According to Harris, "subject matter" has multiple layers which include "the system of clues [ideas]," "labyrinth of reality" that systems of clues point, "human subjects," and "the One Who Is."²⁵⁵ Harris views that "every subject" makes "its own inner demands on the learner" and benefits from the multiple forms or incarnations.²⁵⁶

Harris proposes the following specific forms as suitable for religiously imaginative teaching: a form of indirect communication, incarnational forms, a form of art. Indirect communication is effective for "the learner reforming the sense of self."²⁵⁷ "Incarnational forms" consist of "verbal," "earth," "embodied," and "discovered" forms.²⁵⁸ Earth forms, the "forms offered to us by the world itself"²⁵⁹ such as "water,

²⁵¹ Harris, *Teaching*, 157.

²⁵² Ibid., 167.

²⁵³ Ibid. These are a list of "three decisions" that must be considered when "taking form."

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 46, 42.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 32, 33, 34.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 46.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 95.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 70.

earth, fire, and air,"²⁶⁰ urge us to be aware of "our basic relatedness" to earth, to "one another," and "to all being."²⁶¹ "Embodied forms," best represented by human beings, emphasize the "involvement" and "presence" of "the whole person" which includes "the physical *and* the psychic" in a teaching situation.²⁶² "Forms for discovery" involve "a design of situation" as one proper form and aim "to see what happens" "without a particular end in view."²⁶³ "Artistic forms" involving such "world stuff" as clay, color, and sound are a way of "knowing through the world" and through "emotion" or "play."²⁶⁴ Harris insists, the artistic form is not an offense to "rationality" but consummates the rationality.²⁶⁵ The artistic form naturally leads to worship.²⁶⁶

Form-giving or incarnation of subject matter involves "reflection" or "receptivity" as "a work of contemplation," "rigor" of asceticism, and creative act of "bringing together of disparate elements."²⁶⁷ Therefore, contemplative, ascetic, and creative imaginations are in use to give birth to forms. An adoption of multiple forms affirms the sacramental value of "all in creation" that mediates the holy.²⁶⁸ For Harris, form-giving or incarnation

²⁵⁹ Harris, *Teaching*, 50.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 51.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 53, 51.

²⁶² Ibid., 55.

²⁶³ Ibid., 57.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 151, 152.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 154.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 155.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 26.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 63.

is a serious business, but it is still not the end in itself since the form-giving must lead to the revelation of subject matter. She explains the term "revelation" as reaching "the depth of subject matter beyond and below the surface."²⁶⁹ In other words, subject matter must be far more than mere concepts but must reveal the deeper meanings of reality, "human beings," "the Divine Mystery," or/and "Universe."²⁷⁰

Revelation means to "discover a relationship to" a subject matter, the relationship that introduces "a demand made, a choice offered, a course of action proposed."²⁷¹ Responding to that demand, choice, and proposed action, learners "discover power within."²⁷² Consequently, religiously imaginative teaching aims at helping others "discover and claim their own powers."²⁷³ The end result of the teaching is "claiming of power" or "empowerment" by the students.²⁷⁴ Harris stresses that the power discovered is not just "with and for oneself" but also "with and for others."²⁷⁵ The discovered power is to be used for the work of "re-creation of the world,"²⁷⁶ "the world of communion, of

²⁶⁹ Harris, *Teaching*, 172.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 63, 62.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 68.

²⁷² Ibid., 68.

²⁷³ Ibid., 179.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 78.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 82.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 88.

justice, and of peace."²⁷⁷ Accordingly, Harris' vision of religiously imaginative teaching has "social," "political," "corporate," and "communal" dimensions.²⁷⁸

Harris' term "*social re-creation*" sums up the nature of teaching, with the word "social" connoting communal and political dimensions of teaching, and with the word "re-creation" implying religious and imaginative ones.²⁷⁹ From her heightened social, political, and communal awareness, Harris' attention shifts from the "forming of subject matter" to "reforming of the [educational] setting" itself,²⁸⁰ since, she believes, it is

an entire curricular environment or culture that educates by being a special setting, whole in itself.²⁸¹

Harris problematizes the exclusion or "silence" of "women" and "those who are without political power."²⁸² Her "re-creation" paradigm of teaching focuses on creating a "more *broadly representative* environment for teaching" which includes those previously excluded people.²⁸³

Utilizing the experiences of "outsiders," especially women,²⁸⁴ her re-creation paradigm consists of five "generative" themes that are also used in the "steps of

²⁷⁷ Harris, *Teaching*, 77.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., xvi. Power is "political" when it is used "publicly," according to Harris. Ibid., 79.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 84.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 97.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid., 103.

²⁸³ Ibid., 101 (*italics mine*).

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 99, 101. According to Harris' usage, "woman as outsider" is "a metaphor" that stands "for an entire world of outsiders" Ibid., 102.

movements" to follow: "silence, awareness, mourning, bonding, and birth."²⁸⁵ The theme of "silence" attends women's and outsiders' experiences of silence by the powerful in order to "create knowledge," and emphasizes listening to the silenced and finding voices of one's own, of others, and of entire people.²⁸⁶ Listening from the silenced is followed by "an awareness" that is a "political" act.²⁸⁷ Political awareness impels education to execute a task of "analysis" that is "critical," "imaginative," and "prophetic."²⁸⁸ "Mourning" is "a necessary passage between the awareness and action."²⁸⁹ Mourning signifies "discarding," "purging," "reforming," "recreating,"²⁹⁰ "passing," and "letting go."²⁹¹ Moreover, mourning has "bodiliness" and "the character of ritual."²⁹² Harris stresses that mourning must be taken as the "essential content and process" of "all learning."²⁹³ "Bonding" points at inherently "relational" nature of teaching.²⁹⁴ Bonding is "the power...of the outsider."²⁹⁵ Bonding of sisters extends "to all, even "to the earth"

²⁸⁵ Harris, *Teaching*, 97, 98. Each step, according to Harris, 'bears the one that follows it.' Ibid., 98.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 103, 104.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 105.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 106.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 108.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 109.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 110.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 110.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 111.

"our Sister."²⁹⁶ Bonding "engenders birth"²⁹⁷ which is women's "pivotal experience."²⁹⁸

A birth metaphor emphasizes "unhurriedness," "hiddenness," and "bodiliness," which Harris considers central to education.²⁹⁹ Bonding stresses that teaching is to "bear" and to "give birth to" "human selves," "systems and structures," and even God.³⁰⁰

Viewing "the entire world" as "revelatory" and thereby "educational," Harris argues for "the teaching vocation of all persons."³⁰¹ In addition, she offers a model of what ideal teachers would be and should do. Teachers' major job is "to set up an environment,"³⁰² especially a "question-raising environment" as oppose to "the answer-giving" environment,³⁰³ and an "environment of freedom" that allows "the human psyche to do its work."³⁰⁴ Harris emphasizes the teachers' ability to be present with "personal reality," being true to themselves, closely engaging with "human feelings and human relations."³⁰⁵ The teacher is "a contemplative," "an ascetic," and "a creator," and her

²⁹⁶ Harris, *Teaching*, 112.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 114, 115. Hiddenness means that learners' daily growth is hidden from teachers. Unhurriedness means that "the moment of revelation comes in its own time." *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 131.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

teaching is "a sacrament."³⁰⁶ The teacher is "a midwife,"³⁰⁷ teaching others "to claim[or come to birth] the power that is [theirs]."³⁰⁸ Teachers' vocation is inherently "political," involving "the political tasks of making a more just public world."³⁰⁹ The teacher functions as "a priest" where she helps students claim power to build community by "ordaining [them] into a world of responsibility."³¹⁰

A Synthesis

All feminist educators show keen interests in recovering genuine relationality and community. Relationship and community are two generative themes of education for women. Belenky et al. view the inclusion of both self and others in the process of knowing as a mark of genuine maturity of female knowers. Belenky et al's connected model of teaching intends to develop women's voices, power, and community. Hess' conversational education aims at promoting genuine relationality and community, taking female self-development as an immediate goal. hooks' liberatory classroom strives toward the "transformations of social relations" from antagonistic to democratic in order to liberate the oppressed.³¹¹ Russell's partnering education helps people live full

³⁰⁶ Harris, *Teaching*, 162, 163. Teachers are contemplatives in their acts of "seeing, attending, and looking," ascetics by trying to "do no violence to the student or subject matter" in "keeping a respectful distance," and creators by "drawing together elements needed" for teaching."

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 81.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 87.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 82.

³¹¹ hooks, 195.

partnership of interdependence and mutuality according to God's intention for New Creation. Harris' teaching as the work of religious imagination directs its effort at helping people claim their own powers for oneself as well as for others, the powers that lead to communion, community, or an "interdependent" world of justice and peace.³¹² All five feminist paradigms of teaching display a common interest in transforming people's relationships with oneself, one another, God, and creation, and thereby creating communities of mutuality, justice, and freedom, by empowering the powerless and power-less people of society.

In all five paradigms, community is taken not just as the goal but as the primary context and the vehicle for teaching. Belenky et al. pay attention to the contextual development of female knowers in and through the relationships with significant others, especially in familial contexts. The outcome of connected class depends on participants' sense of community that is expressed in an atmosphere of "connection," "collaboration," "respect," and "acceptance" of one another.³¹³ Hess suggests that faith communities, including families, play a pivotal role in providing the educational environment to promote women's and communities' relational growth. hooks focuses on creating and sustaining classroom communities by perceiving community creating and sustaining activities themselves as liberative. Russell views the growth in partnership occurring through the sharing in and of communities of faith. While recognizing the organic growth through the social interactions among community members, Russell adds intentionality to that natural process, as seen in her notion of third thing. Harris sees "the

³¹² Harris, *Teaching*, 95. For more information about communion and community, look at *ibid.*, 76, 77, 82.

³¹³ Belenky et al., 229.

world" as a "curricular environment,"³¹⁴ and "the entire community," along with "the individual teacher," as the primary "agent of teaching."³¹⁵ Understanding either as individual or community, teacher's major job is to set up an environment that is question-raising, free, and relational. Keenly aware of the shaping power of community, as in families, faith communities, culture, and the world community, the five feminist models of teaching add an element of intentionality to natural, organic social interactions in community (Hess and Russell) or to create community-like environment in classroom (Belenky et al. and hooks).

Relationship and community as the generative themes subsume the following categories: voice and silence, experience or experiential knowing, emotion or affective knowing, body or embodied knowing, teaching process, and non-neutrality of teaching. All of these sub-categories are related to sustaining and empowering relationship and community.

Voice and silence: A theme of voice is prominent in the work of Belenky et al. and Hess. Belenky et al. see the development of voice intimately interrelated with the development of female self while perceiving silence as a sign of no self or underdeveloped self. Belenky et al. measure women's highest maturity by one's ability to listen and to speak with others as well as oneself. A goal of Belenky et al.'s connected teaching is to develop women's authentic voices, specifically in public settings. Hess, drawing on Belenky et al.'s work, sees an interrelation among female voice, self, and

³¹⁴ Harris, *Teaching*, 95.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 97.

power.³¹⁶ Hess asserts, to establish genuine community, there is an urgent need to develop women's legitimate voices by utilizing "hard dialogue" and "deep connections." hooks asserts that by valuing each individual voice, we create a classroom community that works toward freedom and liberation. hooks extends the feminist discourse on voice to include not only an issue of gender, but the issues of class and race. For example, hooks problematizes the silencing of students from underprivileged class backgrounds and silencing of black females who lack the theories.

Harris takes up an issue of the silence of women from curriculum and offers the re-creation paradigm of teaching that is biased toward the experience of women as the outsiders. In Russell's partnering education, voice is not an explicit theme. But it is implied in her notion of the shared reflection followed by the shared action in communities of faith. Russell also acknowledges that "naming" or "articulating" the situation of oppression by the oppressed "is part of the process of changing it."³¹⁷ In all five paradigms, coming to voice is seen as a critical issue for women, the underprivileged, or the oppressed.

Experience: In five feminist teaching models, experiential knowledge is encouraged as a legitimate way of knowing and is appropriated as the resource for developing feminist pedagogy. Belenky et al., building on Sara Ruddick's original idea of "maternal thinking," utilize the women's experience of mothering to postulate the concept of midwife teacher.³¹⁸ In connected classes, personal, private, or firsthand

³¹⁶ Hess, 183-85.

³¹⁷ Russell, 148, 146.

³¹⁸ Belenky et al., 218. Ruddick defines mothering as "a practice or work" that can be done by anyone without "a particular sexual commitment." Sara Ruddick,

experience of each individual is valued³¹⁹ and recognized as a legitimate "source of knowledge."³²⁰ Hess reconsiders women's experience of "caring and mothering," which has been "devalued and neglected" by both men and feminists.³²¹ Hess' conversational educational reclaims caring as the resource for women's relational growth, while significantly redefining caring as what men and women do and addressing the needs for both empathetic and prophetic caring. hooks argues for the classroom use of experience to build a democratic classroom community. Experience, according to hooks, is a relevant way of learning, and its use has a strong political connotation. The use of experiential knowledge connects the classroom to the outside world. Russell does not explicitly use the language of experience. But, her partnering education is experientially oriented as long as it advocates the learning by participation and by repeating action and reflection cycles. Harris' earth, embodied, discovered, and artistic forms support the learners' firsthand experiences. Harris makes use of the experience of women as the primary resource for re-creation paradigm of teaching. She adopts the metaphor of birth, an experience of prime importance to women, to express a person-forming and reforming, world-forming and reforming nature of teaching.

Empathy, Emotion, Affective Way of Knowing: According to Belenky et al., empathy is a major instrument for knowing by connected, procedural knowers who learn by employing both feeling and thought in the context of relationship. Constructivist

Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), xi, xii.

³¹⁹ Belenky et al., 221, 229.

³²⁰ Ibid., 123.

³²¹ Hess, 118. Feminists, according to Hess, refuse "to be defined by" caring.

knowers use "attentive caring" in order to understand both people and impersonal objects.³²² For Belenky et al., knowing is an "intimate" event by establishing "a communion with what they are trying to understand."³²³ Hess' conversational education weaves together two sides of caring: empathetic caring (or connection) and prophetic caring (or differentiation). Exemplified by her expression "hard dialogue and deep connection," holding both empathy (or an affective faculty) and separation (or a critical faculty) is critical for women's relational growth. In Russell's partnering education, providing caring and challenge, or promoting cognitive conflict in the context of support, stimulates the growth in partnership. Harris emphasizes that feeling is the "primary" factor in an ideal teaching situations.³²⁴ She sees feeling and thinking not as "separated," but harmonizing in actuality.³²⁵ Coining the term "social re-creation," Harris reveals her interest in combining together the critical, political, imaginative, and emotive ways of knowing.

Body, Embodied Way of Knowing: hooks underscores bringing the whole person to the classroom in order to make the classroom more exciting place and to teach students how to live outside the classroom. hooks views recovering erased bodies into the classroom as a political act since it signifies recovering erased subjectivity and agency. Harris' embodied forms of teaching stress the presence of whole person,

³²² Belenky et al., 143.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Harris, 136.

³²⁵ Ibid., 137.

including the physical, in teaching situations. Harris' metaphors of mourning and birth emphasize the bodiliness of education.

Educational process, structure, practices: Focusing on the issues of voice, experience, emotion, and body, all feminist educators show their interest in educational process, structure, practices, or methods. Emphasizing educational process, their common interest is to empower the learners. hooks is biased toward classroom process or structure, arguing that the power of a liberatory classroom is the power of learning process. Harris stresses the centrality of form-giving ("incarnation") and the necessity of depth-encounter with subject matter ("revelation"). Harris sees the form and content of teaching inseparable, by explaining that "the vehicle embodies the idea, and form is the shape of content."³²⁶ Harris' concept of "multiform idea of Subject Matter" practically eliminates the distinction between the form and the subject matter (or content) when the subject matter (or the content) is used as a vehicle(a form) to lead into deeper levels of the subject matter.³²⁷ Hess' and Russell's faith community approach of education display strong process orientation when they mainly rely on social interactions among community members while intentionally adding educational touches to these interactions.

Non-neutrality of teaching: Most feminist educators I examined recognize a political nature of teaching. hooks, building on Freire's liberation paradigm of education, argues that no education is politically neutral. hooks' preoccupation with classroom practices is an expression of her conviction that teaching is political. Russell, drawing on Freire's conscientization model, asserts that education can be "a tool of oppression" or "a

³²⁶ Harris, *Teaching*, 47.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

process of liberation or exodus."³²⁸ This political sensitivity makes Russell keen on the issue of "social sin" or "systemic" and structural oppression.³²⁹ Russell's typology of churches discloses her awareness that changing individual consciousness and action cannot be acquired without changing communal consciousness and action. Russell uses a faith community approach that emphasizes natural growth in and through community, in combination with liberation approach that stresses critical and committed consciousness, ensuring that the faith communities to be the places of nurturing people and reforming communities at the same time.

Harris, drawing on Freire's philosophy of education, asserts that "all teaching is an exercise of power."³³⁰ This conviction leads her to take social reform or social re-creation as the goal or end product of teaching. Harris' religiously imaginative teaching intends to empower learners to re-create the world. Harris argues that religiously imaginative teaching can also be social and political. Belenky et al. see the power dynamic actively working in women's knowing when they frame each phase of women's maturity as knowers in terms of the power struggle between self and others, especially those conceived as authoritative figures (either persons or systems). Belenky et al., building on Freire's critique of "banking" education,³³¹ consider teachers to function as the midwife teachers or "partner teachers" who assist the students' giving birth to their

³²⁸ Russell, 73.

³²⁹ Ibid., 119.

³³⁰ Harris, *Teaching*, 79. Harris' teaching as religious imagination draws from Paulo Freire's political view of education. In particular, Harris makes use of his ideas such as human being as "*a subject*" (ibid., 32), "generative themes" (ibid., 97), and "problem-posing questions" (ibid., 106).

³³¹ Belenky et al., 214.

"own voices."³³² Connected teaching is political with its strong interest in nurturing students' public voices. Hess' conversational education has a political aim as long as it concerns nurturing women's legitimate voices for genuine relationality or authentic community. Hess asserts that faith communities' fight is against culture's shaping forces that are hostile to women, which become more formidable when combined with uncritical, male-biased theologies and church practices.

On the other hand, while viewing teaching as a political act, Russell and Harris emphasize that teaching is more than a mere political act. "Freedom" or full partnership, according to Russell, involves "social, political, economic, and personal" endeavors, but more importantly, it is "a gift of God."³³³ Similarly, Harris does not see teaching merely as an political act. Instead, she argues that

the political vocation of mediating the grace of power is incomplete if it does not end in love.³³⁴

For Harris, teaching is a primarily sacred work that subsumes teaching as a political act. hooks also sees a sacred dimension of teaching that requires teachers to take care of the whole person of students as well as themselves, beyond the intellectual and including the spiritual and the physical.

³³² Belenky et al., 217, 218.

³³³ Russell., 65.

³³⁴ Harris, *Teaching*, 95.

Feminist Educators in Dialogue with RCT and Feminist Psychologists and Feminist Theologians

From the psychological perspectives of relational cultural theory (RCT) and other relational psychologists, women's development is seen as relational, contextual, and emotional. The feminist educators also confirm the centrality of women's relational, contextual, and emotional development. Relationship and community are two major generative themes for women's education. Belenky et al., Hess, Harris, hooks treat empathy or emotion as the central point of their educational projects whereas Russell does not explicitly deal with emotion or emotional development. There are several overlapping interests among RCT, feminist psychologies, feminist theologies, feminist educators explored in the previous chapters, such as mutuality, relationship differentiation, self-inclusion, and relational images.

Mutuality: The notion of mutuality suggested by RCT and feminist psychological and theological theories illuminates the teacher-student relationship suggested by the feminist educators. In Belenky et al.'s connected classes, knowledge is constructed by the teacher and students collaborating through "conversation."³³⁵ Connected teaching recognizes the authority based on "personal individual experience"³³⁶ and "on cooperation," but not the authority based "on subordination."³³⁷ While the students and teacher claiming their own authorities, the teacher's "special responsibilities"

³³⁵ Belenky et al., 221.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid., 227.

are to "*connect*" or to "empathize with" the students in a "disciplined" manner.³³⁸

Belenky et al.'s view of teacher-student relationship resonates with RCT's view of mutuality in that it acknowledges the difference in power or capacity.

Caretaking leaders, according to Hess, are free to name and share their own voices, visions, or passions. In their naming and sharing, they help the visions of others be enlarged. The leaders also allow their own visions to "be stretched and reformulated through the conversation with others."³³⁹ More importantly, the caretaking leader helps others develop their selves when she models "confident and open" selfhood in sharing of her own passion.³⁴⁰ Hess' notion of caring leadership is congruent with RCT's idea of mutuality as mutual impact.

In hooks' classroom community, the teacher and students take mutual responsibility. hooks acknowledges teachers' power on students as real and yet vulnerable and corruptible. In classroom communities, the teachers are expected to be the role models for their students, striving toward their own self-actualization and healing. In Russell's partnering education, mutuality is assumed in various teaching situations where all members of community teach and learn from one another. Inequality among members do exists, but it is only temporary. While shifting roles, mutually engaging and cooperating, all members of the community share their particular gifts and knowledge.

³³⁸ Belenky et al., 226-27. Connected teachers are expected to "'systemically empathize with the participants'" because of the discipline and training they received. Ibid., 226.

³³⁹ Hess, 227.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 230.

Harris' teaching paradigm shows a heightened view of the learners. The learners and teacher are the "sacraments to one another" leading the other part "to the heart of universe."³⁴¹ "Reverence," "respect," "a sense of one another's radical novelty," and a sense of mystery are what defines their relationship. The teacher's major job is to set up an environment where the learners learn by themselves.³⁴² Like a midwife, the teacher assists the learner's birth of power to re-create. Harris' view of the teacher is concurrently realistic and idealistic. Teachers function like politicians, artists, and priests, while being perceived as "maturing, changing" persons with personal realities and flaws.³⁴³ A deep sense of mutuality that penetrates Harris' view of teacher-student relation originates from her ontological understanding of human beings as the mysteries of God.

Relationship differentiation: RCT's concept of relationship differentiation signifies relational maturity. Similar to the feminist theologians in the previous chapter, the feminist educators in this chapter show the expanded *breadth* of relational interests. While perceiving faith communities (churches) and families as the major places where education takes place, Hess' interest extends to the culture of her own, and of the others, giving critical eyes to culture's shaping power. Hess' concept of "the immorality of narrowness," a concept used to discuss the morality of small group Bible study, effectively discloses her deeper concern of "enlarging" people's "notion of both Christian community and humanity."³⁴⁴ With such an enlarged relational interest, transforming

³⁴¹ Harris, *Teaching*, 75.

³⁴² Harris stresses that "the environment itself could educate if it was properly set up." *Ibid.*, 131.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 139.

³⁴⁴ Hess, 208.

work of faith communities naturally becomes the work of transforming culture and the world. In addition, Hess' notion of "hard dialogue and deep connections" implies that she pursues not only the breadth but depth of relationality.

hooks' adoption of critical lens of liberation theology enables her to closely look at culture, a culture of domination that is the place of stratified power struggles. Her liberatory classroom is a miniature world where the students are taught to live in the outside world as the free agents of history. Similar to feminist theologians such as Johnson and McFague, Russell views "all creation" as part of "God's intention of partnership."³⁴⁵ As it is the case for Hess and hooks, Harris' increased political awareness makes her look at the entire culture as an curricular environment. Harris' relational interest in teaching embraces all humanity and the earth as the objects of bonding or solidarity. Her concept of revelation hints at the depth of knowing which is perceived as the relational encounter.

Self-inclusion: Maintaining an integral sense of self was a major concern for the first period of RCT called "self-in-relation" theory. Self inclusion is the prominent theme in Gilligan' female moral development and Slee's female faith development as in Block's and Nelson's feminist theologies of sin. Hess asserts the priority of self inclusion in women's caring in order to establish genuine community. According to Belenky et al.'s paradigm of knowing, women cannot reach the highest phase called constructivist without learning to include the self in their knowing.

Controlling Images: RCT displays an intense interest in relational images with regard to an issue of internalized oppression. Feminist theologians, Johnson, Brock, and

³⁴⁵ Russell, 13.

Joh notice the inter-relation between the oppression of women and patriarchal, controlling images of God, Jesus, and Sin. Similarly, Hess addresses the detrimental effects of the male-biased theologies of sin on women, which eventually lead to the loss of genuine relationality and community. Echoing Nelson who argues for situation-appropriate categories of sin, Hess claims that "a 'self-assertion is sin' theology"³⁴⁶ is "particularly appropriate" for "those in power," but not for women.³⁴⁷ In addition to such interest in re-envisioning of sin, Hess also contributes in enlarging "the images and characterizations of women"³⁴⁸ and rebuilding the "visions of the 'feminine.'"³⁴⁹ Offering new visions for women and men as co-caretakers, Hess reverberates RCT's interest in introducing new relational images to replace the old and dysfunctional ones.

Harris offers rich metaphors or images of teaching such as bonding and birth. These images are counter-cultural and revolutionary. The metaphor of birth points out that teaching is a serious person re/forming and system re/forming enterprise rather than a mere information delivery activity. Furthermore, Harris stresses that "imagination can change, reverse, and re-create present reality."³⁵⁰ Acknowledging such transforming aspect of imagination, Harris resonates with RCT's latest effort to reshape controlling images that cause internalized oppression.

³⁴⁶ Hess, 94.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 97. Hess points out that all men are not powerful. Rather, like most of women, many men do not have power and are in need of "self-assertion." Ibid., 51. Categories of sin are determined differently according to "power dynamic of a relationship" that influences each person. Ibid., 52.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 122.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 147.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

CHAPTER V

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The Researcher's Positionality

Emergence of the Researcher's Voice

Beginning of this chapter, I use first person pronouns in a narrative style. The abrupt change in writing style may seem inconsistent, lacking in harmony between the first four chapters and the following five chapters. However, two different styles testify my growth from a student of Western feminist theories to a Korean-American feminist who emerged as a scholar and as a practitioner in conversing with other Korean women. My personal voice as the writer has been suppressed by traditional academic constraints, as noticeable in the first four chapters where there was no room to express my affirming, doubting, or challenging voices which are often associated with the emotions such as joy, excitement, a sense of curiosity, or fear.

The decision to use "I" form in subsequent chapters was carefully planned based on two major methodologies I adopted for the study: feminist methodologies and Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is the methodology I used in the study with a group of Korean-American women at Sarang Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington located in northern Virginia [SKPC]. I referenced Joey Sprague's understanding of

feminist methodologies as a meta-perspective for the ethical dilemmas in application of PAR to the study.¹

Sprague from the work *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences* explains that making "the researcher visible in the text" can benefit both the researcher and the readers of the study.² By letting their own voices visible, researchers can "reveal more of their own agendas and biases."³ While writing "in a narrative format," the researchers can help the readers to grasp "a sense of how things actually went in the research process," and thereby to "relive the experience as the researcher did."⁴ Writing in the "I" form also helps in recording the researchers' "initial ignorance and confusion"⁵ and "the pain they suffered doing research."⁶

According to Kathryn Herr and Gary L. Anderson in *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, it is not uncommon for researchers who use PAR as their methodology to write in "a narrative style" since it allows the researcher to reflect on the research process as well as the findings, which seldom can be easily formulated as propositional knowledge.⁷

¹ Joey Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005).

² Ibid., 167.

³ Ibid., 168.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 259.

⁷ Kathryn Herr and Gary L. Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 1-2.

In relation to such self-reflexive activities of the researcher, writing in first person pronouns is extremely helpful in keeping track of major research decisions and "their consequences for one's self and others."⁸ Herr and Anderson render it a critical part of action research that the researchers should be aware of their own decision making process and consequences that ensue.⁹

With this enlightened view on the researcher's visibility in the text, I tried to incorporate "more of the actual words" or quotes from the research participants into the paper, rather than completely "depersonalizing" their voices into an abstract analyses and general findings.¹⁰ These strategies enabled me to "integrate" participants' "standpoints while maintaining the researcher's voice as the primary organizer."¹¹ I believe that incorporating more of the participants' voices resonates with the participatory spirit of PAR.

PAR shares a number of common elements with feminist methodologies. One example is the common emphasis on the "multiple positionalities" of the researcher.¹² The following autobiographical story demonstrates my strategy to make the researcher's voice visible in the text. This story discloses my initial position as I began formulating my research questions.

⁸ Herr and Anderson, 77.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Sprague, 169.

¹¹ Ibid., 179-80.

¹² Herr and Anderson, 43-46.

Researcher as "Outsider Within": Children's Pastor in Black Suit

I was a part-time children's pastor serving a medium sized Korean Methodist church suburb of Los Angeles for 2 years during my doctoral study. Working with children, one would think to wear active and bright colored clothing to church. Instead, I wore a black suit to church for the entire time when I served as the children's minister. The following incident led to an obsession about the clothes I wore, but with a good reason.

My responsibility as the children's minister was to teach children on Friday night and Sunday morning. On one Saturday morning while I was working at the library, the senior pastor called and told me to "babysit" the children while a group of woman attended an one-day retreat. There was no one to replace me at the library and my shift required me to lock up the library after it closes. Hence, I refused despite his firm insistence. Even without my work schedule, which prevented me to go, I would still not have gone. I was angry and saddened by being treated as a babysitter because I was a woman, which was a common practice of Korean-American churches. After all the years of studying religious education and multiple master's degrees and doctorate work, the specialty of my work was eclipsed by gender. Since then, I became determined not to be discriminated based on my gender but to help other women who experience similar injustice in the church. That was why I wore a black suit to the children's ministry as a silent protest to recognize proper status of women in today's church.

This story communicates my motive for doing this research. I began my research not as a "dispassionate" researcher but as an engaged passionate one.¹³ "Asking passionately," I turned my "anger" into a research topic, which is the underdevelopment of Korean-American women's ecclesial leadership.¹⁴ What is important, according to Reinharz, is that this kind of autobiographical story ought to be read not as "a confession of 'bias'" but as a "standpoint" of the researcher.¹⁵ This research paper is written by a middle-aged

¹³ Reinharz, 259.

¹⁴ Sprague, 199.

¹⁵ Reinharz, 259.

Korean-American, female Ph.D. candidate, who experienced the discrimination of working as a part-time children's pastor at a number of Korean churches in both Korea and in America. However, I now serve as an ordained minister of words and sacraments at a PCUSA affiliated local Korean church.

According to Reinharz, by starting "with [her] own experience," the female researcher can ensure her research to start "from the standpoint of women."¹⁶ Patricia Hill Collins' concept of "outsider-within" supports the Reinharz' argument. "Outsiders-within" refer to those people who come to have "specialized, subjugated knowledge" while residing in the margins of a community or an institution.¹⁷ I consider myself as having been an outsider within the "male-dominated" Korean churches and thereby an "expert observer of the male culture" of Korean churches.¹⁸ I formulated my research questions based on the expertise of such subjugated knowledge.

When I went to the research site at SKPC, I went as an "outsider" academic.¹⁹ But prematurely defining my position as an outsider can be misleading since a Korean woman studying Korean women can obtain

certain insider status and deep tacit knowledge about the participants' ethnic communities and gendered perspectives.²⁰

Mrs. Rose is the only female elder of SKPC. She was one of the participants in the women's group. The following story confirms my insider status rather than the outsider.

¹⁶ Reinharz, 259.

¹⁷ Herr and Anderson, 44.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 51.

²⁰ Ibid., 46.

Researcher as Insider: Sitting at Men's or Women's Table?

During the fellowship after worship service, men sit with men and women sit with women... At some point, I took on a mission to sit and eat at a table full of men even though I was not invited. Some women went as far as indirectly criticizing that I sat and ate with the men at their table because I was full of pride in being an elder of the church, rather than trying to break the bad tradition. After a number of attempts to sit at the men's table during the fellowship, I became sick and tired of getting negative feedbacks and left with the intention of never trying that again. However, my small, inner voice tells me that I have to try it again, but the same voice tells me that I do not want to do it again.

As I listened to Elder Rose breaking the story of her inner struggle, I was struck by the similarity between her experience and mine.²¹ The question of sitting at men's or women's table has been my own dilemma since I began my theological education.

Attending several theological seminaries in the United States, there have been many occasions where Korean-seminarians and their spouses were invited to the parties hosted by Korean professors. In many instances, I was the only female seminarian and I had to choose between sitting at the men's table or the women's table. The men's table involved discussions concerning broader, most often academic, issues with male seminarians and male professors while being watched by the male seminarians' wives. Sitting at wives' table consisted of chit-chats about house-keeping or child-rearing which had nothing to do with me while silently agonizing over my missed opportunities for seminarians' fellowship.

I was able to identify with Elder Rose's issue, which showed my initial position as an insider. As I began my research in September 2010, I was an outsider to SKPC. But to the women members at the SKPC, I was both an insider and an outsider.

According to Herr and Anderson, researchers should be aware of their own positions since different positions of researchers will bring about different dilemmas. For example, insider researchers' biggest challenge will be "to make the apparently familiar seem strange" because of their tendency "to take some aspects of the setting for

²¹ Mrs. Rose (pseudonym) is a workshop participant in her late fifties.

granted."²² As a Korean woman in Korean church, making the familiar seem strange was the biggest challenge for my research. Around March 2011, I was ordained and started working as an associate pastor for a group of English-speaking congregations at SKPC. My research location became my work place. Since then, my position as the researcher has officially changed to an insider within SKPC. This change in position pressed me "to produce analyses that are not critical" to SKPC community.²³ As my involvement with the church deepened, the pressure increased.

Researcher as Outsider: I May Not Be One of Them

The issue of researcher's positionality was far more complicated than I had anticipated. The following two stories challenged my position as an insider to the women of SKPC.

Woman Can Not Imagine Herself Preaching

When a group of Korean women first met for the women leadership development workshop at SKPC, I asked them to imagine themselves preaching from the pulpit.

Joohee²⁴: I have imagined what would be like to be a pastor delivering a message from the heart about the life of Jesus I met. I further imagined a certain member of congregation taking in every word and, for others, the word falling on their frozen hearts. I felt those unchangeable hearts made *that pastor* very lonely.

Na [teacher]: You are *that pastor*, the pastor giving a message from the pulpit.

²² Herr and Anderson, 46.

²³ Sprague, 64.

²⁴ Joohee (pseudonym) is in her early fifties and participated in both workshop and post-workshop interview.

Joohee: Yes, if I was the pastor (pause), *that pastor* probably felt very lonely. As the message giving pastor saw the harden hearts, *he* probably felt very lonely... There were many thoughts went through *his* mind.

Na: Can you imagine yourself on that pulpit? Do you think you can deliver a message from the pulpit?

Joohee: No (very quietly).

It became obvious that Joohee was incapable of imagining herself as a preacher. As she started describing herself in the pastor's role in "I" form, she slipped into a third person form and used a respectable tone to refer to the pastor.²⁵ In response to my challenge, Joohee admitted that she could not imagine herself as a pastor. Her inability to imagine confirmed that an ordained woman pastor like me is different from these women.

Sprague warns that

sharing some aspect of identity, say, gender or race, with the researched does not assure "common experiences or interests."²⁶

I had to accept the reality that my status as an ordained pastor and the Ph.D. candidate could build "structural barriers to rapport" with these women.²⁷ There was a strong possibility that I was not one of them. As a female researcher, according to Reinhartz, I need to carefully distinguish my experience "from the experience of 'other women,'"²⁸ unless I fall into two dangers of "solipsism or projection."²⁹ Following Sprague's warning, I took into account the possibility that

²⁵ Her use of a respectable tone is not visible in my English translation.

²⁶ Sprague, 65.

²⁷ Reinhartz, 266. Herr and Anderson also offer a case where different "educational level" hinders a researcher to become an outsider [Herr and Anderson, 45].

²⁸ Ibid., 262.

²⁹ Ibid., 261.

what seems interesting to researchers may not be what best serves the needs and priorities of the groups those researchers hope to serve.³⁰

The following excerpt is from the first women's workshop, which confirmed the doubt about my insider status to these women.

The Women at the Kitchen

I showed a picture of Martha and Mary in the book of Luke 10:38-42 and asked the women a question "with whom do you identify more?"

Na [Teacher]: ...Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened as Martha was in background with an angry face... Which of these two women is closer to you? Which is more alike you in the church?

Okja³¹: Mary's role looks better to me although I am not currently in that role.

Na: Could you say, instead of how it looks to you, where are you actually in the church?

Okja: I am saying that's where I want to be sometimes.

(Cross talks)

Rose: For our church, there are two types. One type who works hard and the other type who listens.

Soonhee: My real role is similar to Mary, but many instances in our church require me to help everywhere hands are needed. That is the reality of our church, but my true self is more like Mary.

Na: Any other thought?

Hanna³²: We all desire to be like Mary but if we have responsibilities, we tend to focus on them.

³⁰ Sprague, 181.

³¹ Okja (pseudonym) is a workshop participant and an interviewee in her early seventy.

³² Hanna (pseudonym) is in her early sixties who participated in both workshop and post-workshop interview.

Joohee: In this Sunday afternoon, we had many guests, and as we worship, my thought was whether the rice cooker was on.

Soonhee³³: I think what's important is what is in your heart. If you want to choose work over Bible study just because you hates the Bible study, or.

Na: Is the work in the church a choice? Or an inevitable task?

Soonhee: Many times, it is an inevitable task, but sometimes there are women who choose the work because they do not want to be in the Bible study.

No woman raised a single word of criticism for what I had considered as an obvious injustice to these women, that is, confining their roles to kitchen chores. While expressing their desire to be like Mary, these women were actually behaving more like Martha. No one raised a question about such an inconsistency. I pressed them whether being like Martha was their own choice. Soonhee explained certain women chose the work because they wanted to avoid the Bible study. This sounded like blaming the victims.

Soonhee's remark discloses a level of Korean women's awareness about the underdevelopment of women leadership in Korean-American churches. Woman leadership was not the critical issue to them although it was so to me. With heightened feminist sensitivity, it was difficult to sympathize with the women who seemed indifferent to the restricted roles they play in the church. Sensing this ideological difference, I was an outsider to these women.

³³ Soonhee (pseudonym) is a workshop participant in her early sixties. She is the only research participant without permanent US residency status.

The Research Methodology: Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The Basic Principle of the PAR: Never Impose

Joey Sprague defines PAR as an "engaged research" where

community members choose the research questions, participate in decisions about and sometimes implement the methodology, help shape interpretations and conclusions, and use the resulting knowledge in some form of social action to increase equality.³⁴

Sprague's definition of PAR is generally acceptable but it calls into question whether the research done at SKPC is qualified as an action research. For instance, the research question was initiated by me, rather than the participants themselves. Accordingly, I relied on Herr and Anderson's loose definition of the PAR. Wanting to keep the "eclectic" nature of PAR originating from many diverse research traditions, Herr and Anderson refrain themselves from giving a facile, easy definition of the PAR.³⁵ Rather, they define the PAR as something that is not. They contend that

action research is inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to* or *on* them.³⁶

Herr and Anderson are adamant in that

so-called participatory research that is excessively impositional or that cynically uses the appearance of participation to impose an agenda is not acceptable.³⁷

Even with the loose definition, I feel compelled to explain more in order to secure the methodological legitimacy of my PAR because of several issues related to the notion of

³⁴ Sprague, 182.

³⁵ Herr and Anderson, 5. For a detailed information about action research traditions, look at Herr and Anderson, 8-28.

³⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁷ Herr and Anderson, 101.

imposition or collaboration. For now, I can begin by clarifying my PAR as standing in the "action research tradition as liberation" from Paulo Freire's legacy which stresses the "emancipatory" goal or "humanization."³⁸ I will further clarify the definition of PAR in the following sections as I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of my PAR project.

My Research as the PAR: With Emancipatory Interest

This study is qualified as the PAR because of its strong "emancipatory knowledge interest."³⁹ The emancipatory interest is clear since the major goal of the study is to help Korean-American women better understand the reality of underdeveloped women's leadership at Korean churches and *transform* that reality. Borrowing Herr and Anderson's technical term, my study has a strong "catalytic validity" which refers to

the degree which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it... All involved in the research should deepen their understanding of social reality under study and should be moved to some action to change it.⁴⁰

The workshop members had at least one climactic moment when they planned an action to share the kitchen chores with the male members of church.

On the other hand, not all actions need to be visible. According to Herr and Anderson, actions in action research can mean the actions

that organizational or community members have taken, are taking, or *wish to take* to address a particular problematic situation.⁴¹

³⁸ Herr and Anderson, 15-16.

³⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁴¹ Ibid., 4 (*italics mine*).

Alice McIntyre in *Participatory Action Research*, citing Kidd & Kral, offers another inclusive definition of action. Action refers to

any concerted effort to remove some impediment that hampers the growth of a group of people, be it *structural or ideological*, could be defined as action within the framework of PAR.⁴²

Accordingly, virtually everything we did and wished to do as a workshop group who gathered to take up the women's leadership cause could be considered as an action. Even running the workshop session together is an action. The struggle to figure out the ways to share the kitchen chores was an action. Fathoming what faith means to Korean women was also an action. In addition to the entire workshop session, each segment of the workshop that problematized a specific issue was an action. In this sense, the workshop group produced numerous actions.

Insook and Kumhee described how these small, non-dramatic group discussions as corporate actions led them into deepening understanding of women leadership or faith, which in turn led to various forms of actions.

Insook: Before, I thought the women leadership must be something that occurs in prominent area of our society. But from our discussions, I come to realize that the women leadership can be anywhere a woman is not justly recognized in her roles whether it is in her home or her work place. No matter where and what my role is, as long as I can claim all of my respectable rights, I am fulfilling my woman leadership.

Kumhee: In the beginning, I had initial reservation toward the feminist theologies, but in bits and pieces they prompted me to rethink about my faith. There were things that I took for granted, but the workshop made me reconsider in terms of how I should think and act. For example, I have been doing house chores all by myself and complain if it gets hard. But now, instead of keeping it inside and complaining, I ask my family to assist as constructive family activities.

⁴² Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 33 (italics mine).

Class discussions as part of the actions led Insook to an action in the form of her determination "to claim" her right. Kumhee's action was more concrete in that she "ask[ed]" for more family support. There had been many accounts of such transformation as reported by individual participants.

During the seventh workshop, ten women including myself took active parts in main Sunday worship service. Each woman took verses in reading of the day before the sermon. These women also sang a special offertory song. It was great to see nine women making their presences visible and raising their voices in front of entire congregation. I was the preacher, delivering a sermon on John 4:1-12 entitled "Jesus' invitation to healing." The sermon was *ours* rather than mine. A week prior, we had a group devotional time on the sermon text. While sharing, Joohee broke into tears and said,

when I think about the Samaritan woman, I see myself in her as she was comforted by the visit of Jesus despite the alienation and victimization by others. (tearfully) In my difficult time, as I worship, the lyric "Lord knows me..." touched me and comforted me. I was moved because God knows me and touches my heart although God cannot be seen or touched physically. (crying)

I incorporated Joohee's "Lord knows me" theme into my sermon, while grounding the entire sermon in a feminist interpretation of sin as self-denial which requires healing rather than forgiveness. The sermon reflected our group's corporate struggles, including the confusions and pains, in trying to comprehend women's sin which is different from the men's. At the beginning, Joohee was unable to imagine herself preaching. But seven weeks later, she heard her "voice"(what she said in our discussion) being preached through a female preacher's voice. Catalytic value of this study was the most conspicuous in our last corporate action where each one took active leadership roles in the worship.

According to Herr and Anderson, catalytic validity should be applied to all parties involved since

not only the participants, but the researchers/practitioners themselves must be open to reorienting their view of reality as well as their view of their role.⁴³

I have changed the most as a result of the research. My perspective on Korean women and their leadership has changed from the negative to positive. For example, I have newly found Korean women to be theological thinkers. They are far stronger and wiser, virtual leaders of the church than I thought, striving to creatively adapt to, and even transcend the harsh, women-limiting environment of Korean churches and families. The following chapters can be read as a summary of how I, as a researcher, have changed regarding my understanding of Korean-American women and their leadership.

Two Goals of the Research: To Transform and to Teach

While acknowledging inherently "eclectic" nature of PAR which stems from multiple traditions, Herr and Anderson warn researchers

not to ignore differences or transfer models inappropriately beyond the contexts for which they were developed.⁴⁴

Accordingly, they advise that

the definition [of PAR] that a researcher chooses should be made clear in a dissertation.⁴⁵

I align the study as an action research in "the legacy of Paulo Freire," upholding its cause of "liberation" and "greater humanization" as the primary research interests.⁴⁶ Adapting

⁴³ Herr and Anderson, 56.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

Freirian action research as the methodology, my interest in teaching is not just to improve but also to transform the leadership issue.⁴⁷ By conducting PAR with a group of Korean-American women at SKPC, I aspire to help them move toward the active leadership in the churches, families, and society.

In addition to empowerment of women, I have another, equally important goal, that is, to develop a feminist teaching theory and methodology which can be used in Korean-American churches, based on teaching experience of the workshop at SKPC. I was interested in seeing the effects of implementing seven feminist or relational principles which were developed from the psychological, theological, and educational theories. I aspire to develop a Korean culture specific feminist pedagogy, which I named "relational pedagogy," hoping that it will eventually transform the women leadership in Korean churches. Such an aspiration in teaching is not unusual among the action researchers because the impulse to improve teachers' practices are identified in various PAR traditions.⁴⁸

The two goals of the research were *empowering* women toward the leadership by teaching workshops based on seven feminist, relational principles and *gathering* data for

⁴⁶ Herr and Anderson, 15-16.

⁴⁷ Herr and Anderson comment on two divergent views on the goal of action research seeing it either "improving practice or developing individuals," or "transforming practice and participants." Ibid., 9.

⁴⁸ For more detailed information, see Herr and Anderson's discussion under the titles "Action Research in Education," "The Teacher-as-Researcher Movement in Britain," "The Practitioner Research Movement in North America," and "Action Research as Self-Study and Autoethnography." Ibid., 17-25.

developing a Korean culture specific feminist pedagogy.⁴⁹ Upholding two goals at once may jeopardize the legitimacy of methodology. However, I do not think the attempt itself is ethically wrong as long as I am aware of the potential danger and try my best to prevent it. The importance is the actual usage of research. The research finding, agreeing with Herr and Anderson, must "be fed back into the setting" (SKPC) to transform it into a more women-flourishing site.⁵⁰ I also hope the findings of research contribute to the education of women in other Korean-American churches beyond SKPC. The following chapters can be seen as the part of process in transforming "local knowledge" into "public knowledge" that is "transferrable to other settings."⁵¹

How PAR was Applied: Strengthening Collaboration

This part of the chapter describes how the PAR was implemented at the research site. I began the research with an "agenda that was not negotiated with the [research] group itself."⁵² This can throw a doubt about the methodological purity of the research. However, my initiative does not automatically disqualify the research as PAR. According to Herr and Anderson, the "issues of reciprocity for PAR and collaborative research are very complex,"⁵³ and what really matters is the researcher's "reflexivity

⁴⁹ According to Reinharz, action researcher's attempt "to change people's behavior while gathering data" is not unprecedented. Reinharz, 181. On the other hand, my goal of empowering women presupposed that I was open to pursue new emerging "action goals" as workshop proceeded. Ibid., 178.

⁵⁰ Herr and Anderson, 10.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 90.

⁵³ Ibid., 40.

about one's role in the research."⁵⁴ The following four sections record the efforts to overcome the methodological, ethical, and practical dilemmas I encountered in applying the PAR to research.

Beginning the Research with My Agenda

I was introduced to SKPC by a woman elder Rose who supported the need for women leadership in Korean churches and who became one of the participants of workshop. She arranged a meeting with the senior pastor where I explained the research plan to offer a six-week women leadership development workshop for my Ph.D. dissertation. He agreed and the workshop was scheduled to coincide with the church's anniversary after advertising in a Korean TV channel as a part of anniversary event. I am not sure if it qualifies as negotiation referred by Herr and Anderson when respondents agreed to participate in the workshops based on the advertisement of the workshops which explicitly listed the researcher's interest and agenda. The following is the actual advertisement to recruit research participants.

An Advertisement: Women's Leadership Development Workshops

Hello, my name is JongMi Na Lee who is Ph.D. candidate for (Practical Theology/Religious Education) at Claremont School of Theology in California. I would like to offer 6 week women's workshop, which will be the research basis for teaching theory and methodology in developing women leaders in Korean churches, titled "Nurturing Korean Women's Relational Experiences Toward Leadership In the Church." This workshop is open and welcome to any Korean women who are interested in maturing her faith and desire to develop leadership in the church regardless of denomination. This is an opportunity to learn and view different facets of your faith and contribute to women's education in Korean-American Christian community. These workshops will refocus the traditional doctrinal categories from the perspective of feminist theologies. You would be the owner of the workshop. I will be an equal participant as I will provide an arena to

⁵⁴ Herr and Anderson, 101.

freely express your thought and guide you through the discussion among the group. Please, expect to take the ownership of group discussions.

I initiated and designed the research. There were many predetermined aspects of the research that I made explicit in the advertisement. Being aware of these limitations that may have gone against the rigid definition of PAR, I tried to maximize the collaboration from the participants by making the research more participatory, doing it, if *not* by them, at least *with* them.

Negotiating the Power to Speak

The following excerpt shows how the teacher and participants implemented the group discussion method for the workshops.

Na [Teacher]: ...What shall we do in order for everyone to participate?

Kumhee⁵⁵: We should go around the room and have mandatory discussion no matter how short it would be?

Na: I thought about that too.

Joohee: Wouldn't it take too much time?

Na: My concern is, it seems like a dictatorship.

Joohee: I prefer the forced discussion because the teacher can *effectively* moderate the session if it gets out of hand or if it goes south.

Na: If not forced, only few people talk and others will never.

Joohee: That is the role of teacher who monitors each and everyone and then nudges the one who wants to talk but is too shy to come forward. I think it is up to the teacher to manage the discussion.

Na: I agree with your assessment. But isn't that giving too much control to the teacher. Any other thought?

⁵⁵ Kumhee (pseudonym) is in her early fifties and participated both workshop and post-workshop interview.

Joohee: We all had a typical Korean education where only teachers taught and students listened. It is not because we are introverted but because we have been used to listen rather than come forward freely. We are afraid to offend someone or ruin the course of discussion by going out of context. Therefore, it would be good for teacher to guide us in the discussion.

Na: Is then all agree that I will lead our discussion as I see fit? (all answered "Yes") It looks like Insook is not agreeable.

Insook⁵⁶: I too agree. But there are people among us who will not blur a single word in hours. It would be too embarrassing if teacher asks those folks to talk, but they have nothing to say and teacher keeps insisting to speak rather than just pass.

Na: Of course, teacher should not force anyone to speak.

Insook: Okay. Ask once though.

Na: Anyone can use "pass" to move unto others. Even saying "pass" is an expression. It is not less important to listen to your voice than what you actually say. Saying "pass" is also a voice you are expressing.

I invited the participants to share the power to run the discussion. Most participants wanted me to keep a certain degree of control with an expectation that I as the teacher can run the group more "efficiently." In fact, that was the same concern that I raised after the first workshop. I noticed a tendency for some participants to monopolize the group discussion. I did not see this problem as a matter of efficiency as Joohee saw it but rather as an issue of unequal distribution of the power to voice. Either way, I acknowledged that some actions were needed. I agreed to lead our group discussion.

The voluntary relegation of the participants' power to speak to teacher seemed in part coming from their lack of confidence in free discussion style of learning as Joohee honestly admitted. Throughout the conversation, I tried to convince the participants that it is not the teacher but the students who have the power to decide who will speak. In

⁵⁶ Insook (pseudonym) is in her early fifties and participated in both workshop and post-workshop interview.

response to Insook's concern, I made it clear that they also have the right to remain silent. Looking back, negotiating our power to speak was a relatively easy task for us. However, negotiating our agenda was an extremely difficult and painful process and had remained partially unsolved to the last day of workshop.

Negotiating the Agenda: From Not Knowing through Resisting toward Planning

From Not Knowing: Tell Me Why We Are Here

As soon as we began our first workshop, Joohee politely questioned me,

Elder Rose made an official announcement about the workshops for women's leadership. She said that these workshops will last six weeks, each lasting two hours. We are supposed to spend at least 12 hours of our precious time. We want to know what we are going to gain from it. Honestly, I do not know why we have to do it and what is the clear goal for the workshop. Tell me what we are going to get from the six weeks of investment... I would like to know full six weeks' outline beforehand.

Joohee's challenge raised several important issues. First, she raised a concern about "subtle coercion" as Herr and Anderson warn researchers away from "unduly influencing possible participant" to participate in the research.⁵⁷ Elder Rose was one of "gatekeepers" with whom I negotiated the entry to SKPC.⁵⁸ Her enthusiasm could have raised an ethical issue since she was in a position of power due to her eldership. When asked to introduce themselves to the group, including what they expected from the workshops, Joohee clarified,

if I do not sign up, I will be scorned by Elder Rose (laugh jokingly). But, ultimately, I will not be here if I myself do not want to learn.

⁵⁷ Herr and Anderson, 120.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 120.

Five participants mentioned the Elder Rose's encouragement, recommendation, or persuasion to participate in the workshops. But to my relief, all five including Joohee said it was ultimately their own decision to join the workshop.

The second concern involves the participants' lack of understanding or consensus about the major direction of workshops. Only one fleetingly commented on wanting to "become an example for other people to follow." Joohee explained her intention to join the class,

God brought us a good teacher so that women can be trained. Through these workshops, I want to be spiritually trained so that I can fix many wrong things, by fixing myself first, thereby be closer to God.

Although not saying the word "leadership" explicitly, Joohee mentioned the training for women. What she meant by the training for women was not clear when it was used in combinations with such phrases as "be closer to God" and "fixing myself first." She seemed truer when she complained that she did not know "the clear goal" for the workshops. While showing lack of interests in women leadership issue, five women said that they were interested in learning. Hanna said,

I may be old but I am eager to learn new things. I used to attend every teaching sessions I can. I enjoy learning and I am here because I enjoy experiencing new things.

Three women were specific about what they want to learn, these were, "new things," "the Word [of the Bible]," and "what God has planned for me in the future." Some of the expressed interests were to "be born again in faith" and to "see what God wants from me and to know more about God."

Joohee's challenge, "tell me what we are going to get ... I would like to know full six weeks outline beforehand," raised another issue for me. This remark disclosed Joohee's expectation that she was there to "*receive*" concrete knowledge, which the

teacher was supposed to give, assuming that the workshops were to be like what Freire calls "banking" type of education.⁵⁹ I believe other participants who said they wanted to learn meant something similar to Joohee's expectation of the banker type teacher.

However, that was exactly what I was determined *not* to do with the participants.

Apparently, there was a conflict of interests. Maturing faith and developing women's leadership were two goals listed in the advertisement. I consider these two goals to be one in the same. In other words, maturing faith accompanies developing leadership and vice versa. However, for the women, leadership seemed not an issue for their faith.

When the participants talked about "God" or "faith" in relation to their expectations of the workshops, they did not connect it to the issue of leadership.

In the second workshop, we were still not able to clarify the goal of workshop. I could sense different expectations from their prayers. Hanna prayed,

Lord, please make today's workshop an occasion for us to realize your Word and grace given by you through pastor Na. Help her deliver all of her prepared materials fully... Let us know the Lord more and more and provide us with our needs.

Her prayer confirmed that the participants expected me to impart a tangible form of the content. Further, they expected the content to be somewhat related to God's word and grace. However, from their closing prayers that went around the room, I could hear the phrases such as "spitting out our inner faith," "being able to freely express our heart."

This hints that the participants' understandings and expectations of the workshop began to change. By the third week, the participants seemed to understand and enthusiastically

⁵⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, new revised 20th anniversary ed., trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1993), 53. According to Freire, "education becomes an act of depositing," when the teacher "the depositor" "makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat."

accepted their new roles as active speakers rather than passive listeners. An issue of different expectations seemed to subside. But in week five, near the end of the fifth workshop, the issue resurfaced with more powerful force than before.

Through Resistance: Is Leadership a Matter of Faith?

Being concerned that we might not have enough time for final workshop, I suggested,

Na: ...How about another week of workshop? Would it be too much?

Joohee: Let's do another week. I am fine to have one more week. I have never had any question about my faith in Christian life until the workshop with pastor Na. I came to have some questions since the workshop. You (Na) are an academic but we are not. We are laypersons and we never question or doubt what we believe. But you asked us if we could see things differently. Indeed, there are things that I have never thought differently. When you raised different perspectives, I felt I have been living Christian life too plainly, but sometimes I wonder why that would be an issue.

Na: That's an important question. You all have to find the answers yourselves. If you felt that it is a non-issue, or feminist theologians are just trying to raise an issue, then you need to express it boldly.

Joohee: I am trying to suppress my question or doubt, but rather it makes me think there are people who think such issues are important. If I am not clear either, then I need to be clarified. I have not felt these issues were negatively affecting me, but pastor Na showed that it is. This made me question myself and my belief. I am hoping these workshops help me to get closer to God. The workshop that raised the feminist views in our church so far. But, the issues that were raised did not help my faith or concern me greatly. It only showed me that there are other people who have different views and concerns about the feminist issues. Of course, it was helpful for me to study the Bible deeply as I get closer to God. But if it is a man or woman did not matter to me.

Joohee articulated that the women's issue had nothing to do with her "faith" which she identified with getting "closer to God." I thought leadership issue is a matter of faith, but she did not see it that way. I thought it was a time to explain what I meant by "maturing faith" and "developing women's leadership," which were listed in the advertisement. It

seemed a perfect chance to negotiate our different expectations for the workshops. I posed a question,

Na: Could being closer to God and helpful in your faith be understood in different light? If we broaden our sight, for example, if women are discriminated against and the justices for women are ignored, would you say it is not about my faith since it has nothing to do with your salvation? ... Can we also consider having a broader view of the world and being interested in wellbeing of other people, our nature, surroundings as the faith?... My interest and desire is not to become feminist but to *broaden our understanding of faith*.

Joohee: If that is your purpose, why did you not do the workshop with the whole church instead of women only?

Na: The goal of workshop is to develop woman leadership in the church. As such, the focus was not to deliver the content itself but to get everyone involved in practicing voice, agency, and leadership... I do not think we would ever get pass the first step with men in the group.

When challenged again by Joohee, I clarified that the workshops are not to deliver the contents but to empower women's voice, agency, and leadership. While conversing with Joohee, however, I sensed the unbridgeable gap between us, which Joohee framed in her "you," "academic," "feminist" versus "we," "laypersons." My outsider status to these women was confirmed at that moment.

The danger of an outsider to enter a research site with an agenda is imposition. Despite the efforts to avoid that danger, I got trapped. When I followed Freirian, critical, participatory research tradition, however, the above resistance was predictable. Herr and Anderson wrote that "critical pedagogies can become impositional and verge on indoctrination."⁶⁰ In the fifth week, we began exploring God images as a new topic. The following chapter shows that new topic brought about much resistance. On the other hand, the resistance was not all negative since it implies that I provided the participants

⁶⁰ Herr and Anderson, 103.

with an environment that was open, free, and safe for them to raise their dissenting voices.

Toward an Action Plan Initiated by Women

In the seventh workshop, as part of the evaluation, I asked if anyone has experienced the changes in her self-understanding. The question caused an unexpected outcome where the women planned to make the men share the kitchen chores.

Rose: It was difficult for me to work with men in our church as a woman elder. But the workshop encouraged me to be more forth right amongst the men and to change the attitude of men toward women leadership in the church.

Eunhae⁶¹: What are specific things would you change in the men?

Joohee: Chores are done by women and the official matters are handled by men in the church. But from the workshop, I came to realize that I have been subconsciously accepting such roles without good rational basis. This passive acceptance of women's roles is especially prominent in the churches where it is a demonstration of faith for women to be obedient and to serve others.

Insook: Before asking and expecting men to actually do the chores, the set attitude must change first. We have been attacking men as ignorant, but they may sincerely do not know what to do or how to do... We are trying to change men, but they have a set attitude that needs to be broken first. They are stubborn. But if they had the workshops like ours, they could change their basic attitude toward women.

[cross talks]

Okja: If we demand men to do kitchen chores, they may rebel. We must find ways for them to volunteer the kitchen chores. What about pastors and elders enter the kitchen first to set an example? If pastor does, who would refuse.

[crosstalk]

Soonhee: My note from last year says, Mr. Nam (deacon) and Mr. Park (elder) went into kitchen to do the dish wash.

Rose: That stopped after a while. We should start that again.

⁶¹ Eunhae (pseudonym) is in her late seventies. She joined the workshop in the sixth week.

Okja: There will be much talk and complaints after a while as it did before.

Eunhae: We should make it mandatory for men deacons.

Hanna: Putting men on the list as server is one thing, but it is another for them to actually feel compelled to do it from their hearts.

Rose: Let's get two men every week to help us in the kitchen. I will suggest this in the next elders' meeting.

It was pleasantly surprising to see all women participating in the planning. It contrasted with their general attitude toward the same issue of women's kitchen chore that was shown in the first workshop.

By the last day of the workshop, there was a significant degree of shared understanding and appreciation on my teaching style which encouraged the students to speak out. Soonhee said, "these workshops made us respond and drew out our inner thoughts from us." However, there still existed the lingering desire for the banking type of education, which was evident in following feedbacks.

Joohee: It was good that we were able to speak what was in our hearts amongst ourselves freely rather than a teacher teaching us from given topic as in traditional teaching. On the other hand, because of the free style discussion, I don't have specific contents organized neatly in my mind. Nevertheless, I learned that others can see the same things differently, and there are other perspectives to our discussions. Perhaps, it may be more helpful, in your teaching next time, to give students a summary of the contents.

Hanna: We have been used to learning lessons with definite conclusions and organized contents. However, these workshops are not like the traditional teaching. Hence, the contents are not well organized in my mind but continue to linger.

While appreciating the value of talking "freely" during the class, Joohee suggested that the teacher should provide the students with "a summary of the contents." Hanna seemed unable to have a sense of closure because she did not have the "organized" "contents" in her mind. These women partially accepted the speaking as the goal of workshop.

Not Giving Up Both: Methodologically Correct or Ethically Correct?

According to Herr and Anderson, Alice McIntyre's research is an exemplary case where a researcher "unilaterally determined" "the initial agenda" and, nevertheless, justified her study as PAR by intentionally building the "opportunities for collaboration with participants," that is, allowing them to "collaborate with her in the analysis of data."⁶² Herr and Anderson view the collaboration of participants in data analysis process as a mandatory requirement for all PAR research, arguing that

even students who have had minimal collaboration with participants should have engaged in member checking throughout the research process and certainly well before a dissertation defense -that is, participants should be presented with the study's findings and have an opportunity to provide feedback.⁶³

If the research is methodologically correct and qualified as PAR, it is necessary for the participants to be involved in the data analysis process. However, I hesitated in asking for additional time from the women for the data analysis sessions. Each participant had already invested more than 20 hours for the workshops. I knew that they have busy lives. Most importantly, an issue of whether the women leadership was a matter of faith remained unresolved. I could not ask them to spend more of their precious time for the things that might be nonessential to their faith.

Asking the participants for additional time for co-analysis is not a simple matter of individual conscience. But it is an "ethical" issue since Sprague argues,

asking [research participants] to even read research reports assumes that they are interested, and may be more of an imposition than a form of empowerment.⁶⁴

⁶² Herr and Anderson, 103.

⁶³ Ibid., 87-88.

⁶⁴ Sprague, 145.

Moreover, during the analysis stage of dissertation, my status had changed from an outside researcher to an associate pastor of SKPC. The participants could not easily say "no" to my request. Even if they had agreed, it is probably harder for them to challenge my analysis, who is a Ph.D. candidate and their assistant pastor. I agree with Sprague that

class and education can create material differences between insider researchers and those they may study.⁶⁵

Considering these ethical implications, I was torn between two options of *either* giving up PAR and being ethically correct *or* asking for participation and risking imposition.

While sitting at a dessert table, I shared the dilemma with Yonghee and Kumhee.

Yonghee was one of the interviewees I conducted months after the workshops as part of the research.⁶⁶ She told me,

being interviewed by you was a learning experience. After the interview, I could not help but thinking about your interview questions and my answers again and again. Now I can understand better your questions, what could have been your intention in asking such questions. From then on, I have determined to be more self-reflective person.

Yonghee encouraged me to ask the workshop participants to collaborate the analysis, believing that it would give them another chance to learn. Kumhee, a workshop participant, overheard our conversation. Kumhee told me that she enjoyed the workshop and would be willing to do the analysis. Encouraged by these responses, I asked Elder Rose to join us for the data analysis who also eagerly agreed. Getting these women to join the co-analysis sessions satisfied both methodological and ethical requirements.

⁶⁵ Herr and Anderson, 192.

⁶⁶ Yonghee (pseudonym) an interviewee is in her early sixties.

The Research Design

Seven Feminist, Relational Principles

In designing the workshop, I relied on the following seven feminist principles I extracted from the feminist theories in first four chapters . The workshop

- 1) acknowledges the possible co-relation between the controlling images of Christianity and underdevelopment of Korean-American women's leadership. The workshop deals with those controlling images as the critical part of contents.
- 2) employs multiple forms of teaching in order to problematize the potentially dysfunctional relational images of God, world, and ourselves.
- 3) recognizes the importance of not only *the contents* (relational images) but also *the process, structure, or practices* of teaching.
- 4) pays attention to power differentials between the teacher and student-participants, and among the student-participants, trying to create and sustain the relationships of mutuality or ongoing mutual impacts among us.
- 5) empowers the student-participants toward authentic voice and responsible agency by encouraging them to actively participate in group discussions while paying close attention to where silence happens.
- 6) encourages the use of experiential knowledge during the group discussions on parts of both teacher and student-participants.
- 7) cares attentively for emotions, both positive (e.g., joy, excitement) and negative (e.g., anger, conflict) feelings of the teacher and student-participants.

These were the seven feminist, relational principles with which I began the PAR project.

These *initial* principles will be refined as the seven relational principles for the "relational pedagogy" I propose in the conclusion, Chapter Nine. The initial principles are in harmony with the basic principles of PAR that are associated with the legacy of Paulo Freire. For instance, the first relational principle concerning the controlling images of Christianity is to examine how the Christian ideologies interfere with Korean-woman's relational images of herself. Such an intense interest in the internalized oppression

through the controlling Christian images is supported by Freirian tradition of PAR. Herr and Anderson state, citing Brown and Tandon,

traditional action research tends to concentrate on an individual or group level of analysis of problems, whereas participatory research, with its more emancipatory emphasis, tends to focus on a broader societal analysis.⁶⁷

The rest of six principles were *process-oriented* principles. Working with these principles helped maximize the collaboration by the student-participants and, thereby, helped the researcher "study *with*" student- participants, rather than study "*of*" them.⁶⁸

Designing of Workshop

I was a researcher, coordinator, and teacher-participant. I used the semi-structured format to design the workshops by selecting several generative themes such as Bible, sin, God, and church. Each generative theme consisted of many "problem posing" questions and activities.⁶⁹ Actual use of each activity or question depended on the teacher's judgment on students' needs and interests that were discernible at the session. Each workshop was loosely planned. The participants were encouraged to bring any issues they deemed relevant to the workshop for a group discussion. I taught mainly through the problem-posing questions and activities and facilitated the discussions while trying to participate as one of the discussion members. The followings are the activities I prepared and used during the workshop sessions.

⁶⁷ Herr and Anderson, 16.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁹ "Problem posing" education is advocated by Paulo Freire as an opposite concept to "banking" concept of education. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 60. In problem posing education, the students are not seen as "docile listeners" but as "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher." Ibid., 62.

First workshop:

- * Introduce yourself to the group members: Who am I? With which biblical figure do you identify the most? What is your favorite biblical story? Explain.
- * Present a picture of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-43. Then, ask questions, with whom do you identify more? Why?
- * Imagine yourself as a pastor preaching at the pulpit. Share with group.
- * Brainstorming : What images or thoughts jump at you in regard to the word "church leaders"?
- * Re-read the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22:1-14 from the eyes of a mother. How was your experience in reading the Bible from the eyes of a woman? Explain.
- * Workshop orientation: Deliver a mini-lecture about the importance of relationship and connection in women's lives, faith, and leadership.
- * Discuss the confidentiality issue.

Second Workshop:

- * Begin by singing a hymn "My mother's Bible." Discuss the song.
- * Ask a volunteer to pray.
- * Reflect on the first session. Discuss an issue of who and how to lead the group discussion.
- * Fill in the blank: "The Bible is like () to me. Explain.
- * Ask for following activities: List female characters in the Bible. List female victims of the Bible. Name bad, evil women in the Bible. Who decides these women are bad? Then, introduce feminist, alternative readings of Eve. Count the great women of faith in the Bible.⁷⁰ Share the responses.
- * Tell a story of the Levite's concubine in the book of Judges in chapter 19.
- * Mourning exercise: Each participant takes turn saying, "I remember (name one female, biblical figure whom you consider to be a forgotten, oppressed, or

⁷⁰ To prepare for this discussion, I refer to Phyllis Trible, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies," in *Feminist Theology: A Reader*, ed. Ann Loads (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 23-29.

victimized woman). I feel sorry for her and mourn for her because (fill in the blank with the thoughts you feel appropriate)."

* Imagine the Bible as your "friend." What kind of friend is the Bible? Describe your relationship with the Bible to group members. Present a mini lecture on the Bible as "my friend."⁷¹

* Virtual case study debate: Discuss a fictional case study given by the teacher about a divorce decision of a Christian mother to her abused daughter in consultation with their pastor who cites a specific Bible passages against the divorce.

* Brain storming about the word "faith."

* Faith-drawing activity: Briefly introduce James Fowlers' relational understanding of faith and ask the participants to draw a scene that best represents her life or existence. [For those who did not finish the drawing, it was given as an assignment].

* End with prayer with each taking a turn. Ask everyone to say a word of prayer.

Third Workshop:

* Begin with a devotional time: Imaginative experiencing of the story of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Choose yourself *either* in a group of virgins who are saved or in the other group of virgins who are not. Imagine yourself in the situation and try to converse with Jesus and other people there. Present your experience to the group.

* Reflect on the last workshop. Teacher asks: Have you had anything that bothered you or lingered in your mind during the week after the workshop?

* Faith-drawing exercise: Ask each student to explain her drawing to the group using the words "I," "God," and "others."

* Fill in the blank exercise: Authority is (). Explain why or how?

* Ask each of the following questions: Who/what is the most important authority figure in studying the Bible? Explain. How do you respond to general perception of viewing pastors as the "shepherds," and congregations as the "sheep"? In what ways, can we develop partnership among the members of church, including the pastors?

⁷¹ To prepare for the mini-lecture, I refer to Martin J. Steussy, "My Friend the Bible: Proposal for a Metaphor," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995).

- * Brainstorm about the word "sin." What words, images, or thoughts come to you when you hear the word "sin"?
- * Present a mini lecture on feminist alternative ideas about sin, sins of women, focusing on Sudan Nelson's and Carol Hess's relation understandings of sin, and Marjorie Suchocki's systemic, structural understanding of sin.⁷² Then, ask each of the following questions. Do you agree that women's sins differ from men's? What is your response to the idea of social-structural sin? Can the lack of self-esteem be a more serious problem for women than a sin of pride?
- * Explain how to fill in God image Survey which was given as an assignment.
- * End with prayer by a group member.

Fourth Workshop:

- * Devotional time: Sing a gospel, "You are my all in all." Share about the song. Then, begin with a prayer by a group member.
- * Mid-evaluation on the preceding workshops.
- * Listen to Mrs. Rose telling the story of "The Giving Tree." Then, ask a question, does anyone identify with the giving tree?
- * Continue discussing on feminist alternative ideas of sin. Then, discuss the following questions. Is it necessarily for women to take care of ourselves while tending others? Can and should we do both? If so, how? Has motherhood and family worked negatively or positively toward taking care of yourself? What would be the most likely sin of Korean immigrant women living in America?
- * Ask each of the following questions: Will battered women feel sin differently? What are sins for these women? Are we women more sinful than men? Explain. What is your understanding of sins of the flesh? How do you love your body? Is anger a sin? Is sadness and depression a sign of little faith and sinful?
- * End with prayer by a group member.

Fifth Week:

- * Devotional time: Sing a hymn, "What a fellowship. What a joy divine." Then, begin with a prayer by a group member.
- * Reflect on the last workshop. Then, discuss the worship leadership for the seventh week.

⁷² Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

- * Imaginative dramatization exercise in Luke 15:11-32. Imagine yourself in a role of prodigal daughter or a mother of prodigal son. Then, share your experience with the group.
- * A series of brainstorming activities: What words, thoughts, or images jump at you when you hear the word "God," "Jesus," and "spirit"? Ask each word separately in sequence.
- * Present a mini lecture regarding feminist critique about the traditional images of God the Father and King. Then, introduce feminist, alternative images of God, including Sallie McFague's. Then ask: What has been your experience with male images of God, especially as the father or king?
- * Tell my story of being comforted by mother's hand in a dream. Then, ask: Have you ever imagined God as a mother figure?
- * Present a mini lecture on Maria Rizzuto's *The Birth of the Living God*. Share my analysis of student-participants' God image survey. Then, ask for the feedbacks.
- * Present painting of Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32 which depicts the father with both female and male hands. Then, discuss it.
- * Vote for favorite image of Jesus (4 different images of Jesus were presented). Explain the choice.
- * End with prayer by a group member.

Sixth Workshop:

- * Devotional time: Reflect on the woman at the wall in John 4:1-12 using a Lectio Divina method. Share students' feedbacks.
- * Present pictures of Jesus in Korean traditional costumes and Korean looking face. Share feedbacks of the picture among the group members.
- * Present my analysis on the participants' God image survey to the group.
- * Offer five characteristics of Korean-American women's dominant images of God. Then, discuss following questions.

How can you reconcile your image of God the Father who is kind and caring, with your image of God who punishes? Do you fear God who could strike you if you do not obey? Tell me your experience of having encountered with the living God. Can Father God be somehow related to our earthly father since we call God the "Father"? How could you feel differently about God the Father if you perceive your father as a distant, punitive Confucian father or as a more relational and caring, Western father participating in nurturing of his own child?

- * Present a mini lecture on feminist redefinitions of God's power which introduces Case-Winter's idea of God-world relationship.
- * Ask the following questions. Where do you find God's presence most? When were times you felt God's absence?
- * End with a prayer by a group member.

Seventh Week:

- * Devotional time: Sing a devotional song, "You are born to be loved." And then, ask a group member to pray.
- * Ask following questions in sequence. When was a time you felt you were experiencing crisis of faith? What is faith? Are the workshops relevant to your faith? Or not? Explain. Have your perception of God changed after attending the workshop? When were the times you felt God is with you?
- * Brainstorm activity: What words or images jump at you when you think of "the church"? Discuss about the students' understandings of the church.
- * Fill in the blank: The church is like () for me because (). The church is important for me because ().
- * Ask questions: What does church need in order to be the church?
- * Present a mini lecture on models of the church, which introduces a feminist notion of Christian communities as the "body of life." Then, discuss a question, how far are you willing to recognize as part of churches' bodily life?⁷³
- * Ask a question: What are serious problems that our churches are facing in our world today?
- * Ask a question: Which song do you like more? "Amazing Grace" or "You were born to be loved (a popular Korean gospel song)"? Explain your preference.
- * Final group evaluation: End with a prayer by a group member. Have fellowship with refreshments.

This is not the exhaustive list of the problem posing questions and activities I used in the workshop. It would be impossible and impractical to list them all. For instance, when I

⁷³ For discussion on the "body of life," I refer to Kristine A. Culp, "The Nature of Christian Community," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 1995).

prepared well-thought out problem posing questions in advance, the group discussions often veered towards unexpected directions. I tried to list all the original questions, but not all ensuing questions are listed. When the group reflection of original questions resulted in responses, I reframed their responses into new questions back to the group. This way, we ensured "a series of reflective cycles" where a problem-posing of an issue led to the reflection of that issue, which is then followed by the second problem-posing for the same [or, sometimes, a relevant] issue and its reflection, and so on.⁷⁴

All problem posing activities and questions could be referred back to the root question of women's leadership. Accordingly, the workshops consisted of "a series of reflective cycles that include the ongoing problematization of" Korean-American women's leadership practices.⁷⁵ To strengthen these reflective cycles, I wrote a research journal while encouraging the students to write their own. Herr and Anderson see the "keeping a research journal" as critical since

it is a chronicle of research decisions; a record of one's own thoughts, feelings, and impressions; as well as a document reflecting the increased understanding that comes with the action research process.⁷⁶

The results of my research journal reflect Herr and Anderson's definition of research journal. In summary, each workshop was loosely structured to incorporate new questions and issues from the student-participants. Brainstorming activities and fill in the blank activities were used as an opener to introduce new topics and helped me know where my student-participants stand. My organizing principle in presenting problem posing

⁷⁴ Herr and Anderson, 55.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 77.

activities and questions was to seize the opportunity, that is, to bring up the prepared questions or activities when participants themselves raise a relevant issue. Students' receptivity of the day for each issue also influenced my decision of which question or exercise to present.

How was the Analysis Done?

The following three major documents were analyzed.

- * Workshop transcripts: All seven workshops were videotaped and transcribed producing 225 pages (in single line) of transcript in Korean.

- * Co-analysis transcripts: I met with two workshop participants for two sessions of total of six hours to review selected portions of the workshop transcripts. These meetings were videotaped and transcribed, producing 60 pages (in single line) of verbatim in Korean.

- * I interviewed eleven female members of SKPC, six workshop members and the other five non-workshop members. The interviews were videotaped and transcribed, producing 114 pages (in single line) of verbatim in Korean.

Post-workshop interviews were conducted for the "triangulation" purpose in order not to be "limited to only one kind of data source."⁷⁷ Interviewing eleven women at SKPC offered new insights. For instance, interviews with individual women revealed uncertainty and denial of Korean women in calling themselves the leaders of church, which was not noticeable during the workshop. The transcription of the sessions was translated from Korean to English for citing and quoting. The translation focused on the accurate delivery of meanings rather than the literal interpretations. The translation was one of the toughest parts of the research because there were many phrases that lessen the impact during the translation where delicate nuances in Korean disappear. The

⁷⁷ Herr and Anderson, 56. "Triangulation" refers to "the inclusion of multiple perspectives" or "using a variety of methods."

translation would not have been possible without understanding the Korean culture as an insider.

I used "grounded theory" which relies on "both analytic induction and constant comparison" to develop "a theory" or "explanation."⁷⁸ My use of the grounded theory was not purely inductive. That is, rather than solely relying on emerging analytical themes and ideas in an inductive manner, I utilized the feminist, relational themes and ideas from the early stage of initial "coding."⁷⁹ Beginning of the initial coding for process analysis, I anticipated several important feminist themes such as power, voice, silence, emotion, and experience. The use of feminist literature as an analytical scheme can be defended. According to Sprague,

analytic strategies that try to minimize bias by avoiding scholarly discourse and simply immersing oneself in the data are not clearly more effective than those that explicitly build on prior scholarship. Investigators taking this approach may actually be imposing even more serious distortions on their observations, by virtue of their being implicit rather than explicit, and so less open to critique.⁸⁰

Herr and Anderson also affirm the use of literature as "a conceptual framework that guides the data gathering and analysis," arguing that there is

⁷⁸ David R. Krathwohl, *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research: An Integrated Approach*, 2nd ed., (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004), 260. The "grounded theory" is a research method to "gradually develop an understanding of the phenomenon and a theory, or explanation, of how the phenomena are grounded in our observations."

⁷⁹ "Coding" refers to "an inductive reasoning process [and] involves extracting similarities in behavior or perceptions from the data and abstracting the important concepts and dimensions for easier access and retrieval." Krathwohl, 316.

⁸⁰ Sprague, 133.

a dialogue of sorts taking place between the researcher's growing observations and data and what other have written and understood about similar questions and contexts.⁸¹

After intensively studying the feminist literature, it was impossible not to be influenced by it. Far more than simply acknowledging my bias towards the feminist literature, I actively utilized it for the entire phase of the analysis. According to Herr and Anderson, the important issue is whether

the end result should be that the data analysis is pushed by relevant literature and the literature should be extended through the contribution of this action research.⁸²

It is my conviction that this research contributes to the established body of Western feminist literature by critiquing, challenging, and affirming it with new findings of Korean women's relational experiences.

⁸¹ Herr and Anderson, 84.

⁸² Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

PROCESS ANALYSIS: RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

I view the workshop as a gathering of Korean-American women where the women's individual and collective voices were molded. In the workshop, I played multiple roles: teacher-researcher, discussion planner, discussion leader, and discussion participant.

Chapter Six explores the findings of the workshop from the perspective of educational process, structure, practices, or methods. The chapter is organized according to two major questions: When were the student-participants empowered to speak and when the silence occurred? First part of the chapter examines the four elements that empowered the women to make voices in the group. The second part discusses how the specific contents of teaching interfered with the process of teaching and thereby discouraged the students from speaking. It also includes a section on the political nature of teaching, which often had an effect to silence the voice of the teacher.

Empowering Women's Voice

This part explores the factors that contributed toward the women's voices such as no right or wrong answer policy, women only group, students' use of experience in the class, and teacher's use of various teaching forms.

Empowered to Speak Through No Right or Wrong Answer Policy

Power dynamic was an underlying factor in influencing the voices of individual students. This section explores the initial imbalance of power in the group and the subsequent change over time.

"Motivated" to Speak through No Right or Wrong Answer Policy

No right or wrong answer policy was adopted because there were many "received" knowers in our women only group as it is typical in other Korean churches. After adopting the no right or wrong answer policy, the participants gradually stopped looking for right answers from me and started giving their answers freely. The positive effect of the policy was to empower the individual participants' voices, as described by the participants.

Insook: This workshop enabled me to express my thoughts freely. Since no single person monopolizes the conversation, and everyone gets involved in the discussion, I am motivated to contribute my thoughts without any pressure for right or wrong answers.

Okja: Since the teacher premises the question by saying there are no correct answers, it enables me to speak out whatever is in my heart and to hear other opinions. If I hear a similar response to what I have said, then it confirms and reinforces the thoughts I have. We tend to shun away from responding when we are forced to pick the correct answers. But, if there is no pressure of correct answers, we are free to speak out our responses straight from the heart. As we did, I noticed the responses converged to similar opinions amongst us, and as we looked at each other, we came to an eureka moment.

The effect of no right answer strategy was beyond the simple empowerment of the individual voices. This strategy created what hooks calls "an open, learning community" among us, where "everyone's presence" and contribution are valued.¹ The quote from

¹ hooks, 8.

Insook, "everyone gets involved ...I am motivated to contribute....," shows that the policy helped the participants to take ownership and "collective responsibility for the class as a whole."² The policy also coincides with Belenky et al.'s emphasis on letting "everybody voice their uncertainties."³ The policy enabled a place where the students

learned from each other's uncertainties, rather than being silenced by distant authority figures with the "right answer."⁴

As a result of the policy, Okja experienced the transformation into a real knower.

According to Belenky et al.,

if a woman is to consider herself a real knower she must find acceptance for her ideas in the public world."⁵

Okja shows her rebirth as the real knower, that is, how her private knowledge with uncertainty was shared, confirmed, and transformed into public knowledge.

The no right answer policy empowered not only the individual voices but also the voices of the group. Whenever I introduced a feminist idea, I was cautious against blind acceptance. I encouraged the women to think critically toward the Western feminist ideas. I stressed the importance of raising voices as Korean women whenever they are bothered and have questions or doubts. The following chapters contain the result of corporate efforts to discern and make our voices while engaging

more culturally positioned interpretation or reinterpretation from the perspective of a previously silenced group.⁶

² Frances A. Maher and Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault, *The Feminist Classroom: Dynamics of Gender, Race, and Privilege*, expanded ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2001), 157.

³ Belenky et al., 221.

⁴ Maher and Tetreault, 137.

⁵ Belenky et al., 220.

The group affirmed certain feminist ideas and rejected the others, which often led to new insights. By building "new insights together," we were "reconstructing our world" where everyone's voices, including the "previously silenced," can be heard.⁷ The no right answer strategy strengthened the individual and corporate voices of the women. Our open and learning community became a site

not only of the enactment of feminist pedagogies, but also of the development of feminist theory.⁸

Later, I clarified that there can be a right answer for each person while respecting other opinions and beliefs.⁹ The following three sections detail how power imbalances among us necessitated the policy from the beginning and how those initial power dynamics had shifted as we progressed.

Initial Power Differential between Teacher and Participants

The first session started with students' introductions about who they are, why they came, and who are their favorite biblical figures or favorite Bible verses. Every student-participant asked about various minor things, "Do I *need to* write my name in English?," "How long *should* I introduce myself?," "Does the favorite Bible figure *have to be* female?" The students' frequent use of "moral language" such as "Should I ...?," "Do I

⁶ Maher and Tetreault, 65.

⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁹ My clarification is based on James Fowler's idea of "conjunctive faith." One of the characteristics of conjunctive faith is the ability to be firmly grounded in one's own tradition while acknowledging that her or his tradition is relative and partial. James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1981), 198, 186-87.

have to...?," uncovers their perception of the teacher as an authority figure.¹⁰ I was seen as the one who gives directions and is in charge of the workshop. Further, I was perceived as the authority figure who has the right answers. There was little doubt that in their use of moral languages, the women were the "received knowers" looking for "right answers" from the "authorities."¹¹ Joohee's request of "full six week outline beforehand" also confirms that they were the received knowers expecting "the most clear-cut externally imposed pattern" for learning.¹²

Power Differentials among the Participants

In addition to the use of moral languages, another important clue about the power dynamics among the group members was provided by Hyosim who said, "I do not know how to introduce myself." This kind of "meta-statement" delivers a sense of failure since according to Sprague,

respondents will make statements assessing themselves from the perspective of the dominant culture, noting how they fail to meet those expectations.¹³

The following is Hyosim's introduction to the group.¹⁴

My name is Hyosim. I am fairly new in the faith. Although I have been attending churches for over ten years, I was not serious with faith. I would go to church on Sundays and come home with the Bible being opened only once a week in the church. The hard lives in America made me a Sunday worshipper. I had the desire

¹⁰ Sprague, 152. Sprague insists that for analysis of data, people's use of moral language such as "shoulds" or "oughts" be attended carefully.

¹¹ Belenky et al., 39, 40.

¹² Ibid., 204.

¹³ Sprague, 153.

¹⁴ Hyosim (pseudonym) is in her early thirties. She dropped out the workshop after the first week.

to get involved in church activities but was reluctant because it would take too much time away from my daily life. I was embarrassed when someone asked me to look up a Bible verse and could not find it...

In her wordy introduction, Hyosim was apologetic and explained why she was not well versed in the Bible. Hyosim's initial statement, "I do not know how to introduce myself," can be read as the confession of her ignorance in the Bible. By asking the students to include favorite biblical figures or verses in their introduction, I was in part responsible for making Hyosim feel short of Korean Christians' expectation of maturity, that is, being knowledgeable about the Bible. Similarly, Sunhee's introduction reveals a sense of deficiency when she used the following meta-statements: "I have been attending church without knowing anything," "It's hard to read the Bible," "I don't know how to pray," and "I don't have a husband."¹⁵ Sunhee and Hyosim felt a sense of failure in meeting Korean Christians' standard in Bible knowledge and felt inadequate to be a member of the women's group. Consequently, they dropped out of the workshop after the first day.

I regret that they have dropped out since I failed to consider the power differentials among the student-participants. I should have taken into account that some participants could feel deprived because of their lack of biblical knowledge. Their sense of deprivation could also be related to materially under-privileged class experience as hinted by Hyosim who said, "I did not have time to read the Bible while struggling to make the ends meet." Sunhee's statement, "I do not have a husband" reminds me of Younghee, one of my interviewees, who said, "I felt ashamed of being a widow." Like Younghee, Sunhee was widowed. She must have felt the same way with Younghee, feeling deprived and ashamed. hooks is right about seeing the class privilege working in

¹⁵ Sunhee (pseudonym) is in her early fifties and dropped out of the workshop after the first week.

the classroom. However, the way class privilege actually works in the classroom is more complicated or culturally nuanced than she seems to suggest. Being a widow is not shameful in Western culture, but it is in Korean culture.

But Power is Fluctuating

There is more complexity to the power dynamics among participants from the idea of "positionality," which refers to

kind of "metaknowledge," locating the self in relation to others within social structures, such as the classroom, that re-create and mediate those relationships.¹⁶

According to this positional perspective,

people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships.¹⁷

Sunhee's and Hyosim's positions as the powerless can be viewed in a relational term.

That is, Sunhee and Hyosim were deprived *in relation to* other participants who were relatively knowledgeable in the Bible. Sunhee, as a widow, felt marginalized in relation to other women who had husbands. These women were not necessarily deprived or marginalized in other situations within or outside the group. Their marginal position was "context-specific"¹⁸ and "with respect to an issue," for example, the biblical literacy.¹⁹

¹⁶ Maher and Tetreault, 202.

¹⁷ Ibid., 164.

¹⁸ Ibid., 216.

¹⁹ Ibid., 244.

This idea of "constantly shifting" position, authority, or power explains Elder Rose's increasing discomfort and silence during the group discussion in proportion to her increasing sense of marginality in following weeks.²⁰

It was difficult for me to freely talk and discuss with the other women because I am different from them. They were opened to me in the beginning. As time passed, however, they began to shun away from me. It was fun in the beginning. But even after we decided to open up, they closed up. When I spoke my thoughts in such an atmosphere, I looked like a crazy woman. I became less talkative.

In the first workshop, Elder Rose was seen as the most influential person in the group. About half of the participants mentioned her influence in their decisions to join the workshop. However, the eldership of Rose did not secure her authority among the group members. Later, when we met for the co-analysis meeting, Rose confided that she felt increasingly marginalized because of her open attitude toward the feminist ideas, which was in contrast to the women's disapproving attitudes.

The positional perspective also explains the changing perception of the participants toward the teacher from an authority figure with the right answers to a potential *opponent*, as expressed by Joohee's use of such words as "you," "academic," and "feminist." This change in position occurred because of my presentation of unorthodox ideas about God. I agree with the notion of positionality that the "centrality and marginality, oppression, oppressor, and oppressed" are "relational concepts."²¹ A binary opposition is to see the teacher as the one with power or authority and the students without power or authority. This type of fixed, hierarchical, and binary view of power never worked in our group since

²⁰ Maher and Tetreault, 165.

²¹ Ibid., 74-75.

what is perceived as marginal at any given time depends on the position one occupies.²²

My authority as the teacher kept fluctuating according to participants' receptivity to each feminist idea I presented. I felt most marginalized when I tried to introduce the idea of God images.

My positional shift to a questionable authority figure did not occur by chance. Rather, it partly resulted from my intentional efforts to decentralize the authority as the teacher. During the first workshop, when I asked the participants a question, Joohee asked for a clearer explanation.

Joohee: Can you rephrase your question in detail?

Na: You can say whatever you want. I am not the one who has the right answer.

Soonhee: If you do not have the right answer, are you going to learn from other people?

Na: Yes, in fact, I am learning all the time.

I dismissed the authority of the teacher who has the right answers and positioned myself as one of the learners. I was realistic about the fact that I had the most power in planning what and how to teach. Nevertheless, I tried to share this authorial power with the students. Implementing the class discussion method through the group negotiation was one of such efforts. The sharing of the authority also involved negotiating "the idea of mastery" with the student-participants. In the second workshop, Joohee requested,

from the three hour worth of materials, if teacher only presents two hours worth of contents, then we are short of one hour to eat [the contents]. As the teacher, you know which parts are important, hence you should allot more time to the important parts and less to other insignificant parts.

²² Maher and Tetreault, 75.

From Joohee, what she thought as "mastery" was "the acquisition of knowledge on the terms of the experts."²³ I responded,

as a teacher, it is more important to give each one of you enough time to talk about what you are thinking. It is also critical to listen to one another than to cover the materials I prepared. What I have prepared is not important in itself but helps in developing the discussion. The sessions are not about covering the contents.

My response to her shows a different understanding of mastery, that is, "students [seeking] knowledge on their own terms as well as in concert with others."²⁴ In the class, the opinions of each student mattered. The students expressed their own opinions, "own lives, stories, and questions," which became the "sources of knowledge and insight."²⁵ In this way, we redistributed the "expertises" among us and expanded the "sources of authority."²⁶ This alternative idea of mastery acknowledges that

knowledge can be produced by all groups in society, including students, rather than solely by the academic disciplines, experts in a field, or teachers.²⁷

One of the biggest struggles as the teacher was to negotiate this different understanding of mastery with the students and convince them that they have something valuable to offer to the group discussion.

²³ Maher and Tetreault, 57.

²⁴ Ibid., 17.

²⁵ Ibid., 58.

²⁶ Ibid., 57.

²⁷ Ibid., 57.

Empowered to Speak in and through Women Only Group

Okja's Case: "But Here, Everyone Understands Me "

From the first workshop, I noticed Okja struggling to make her voice by competing with the other voices in the group, but without much success. Her struggle often ended up with murmuring to herself or chatting with the next person, rather than speaking to the whole group. Okja was not a fluent speaker as she herself admitted several times, "I do not know how to speak." Her sentences were often unorganized and improperly connected. Later, I learned that she had the least formal education in the group. I found another factor inhibiting her from speaking in public, that is, her controlling husband. During the fourth workshop, she confided with the group,

I am afraid to say anything to anyone, for my husband will get angry if he finds out that I had shared about my family or about him in anyway. I may say something to people only if they assure me that I would not get hurt.

The absence of voice, due to her fear of her husband, reminds me of what Belenky et al. call silent women. As a silent woman, Okja was scared "to be punished just for using words."²⁸ One of the frequently repeated words during my interview with Okja was "I am afraid..." She was fearful of the words of her husband. Okja was also scared of the Word of God that is preached by her pastors.

When our pastor gives a sermon about "do's" and "don't s," his "don't" directed toward me, which makes his words scary. Other pastors tend to talk around the "don't," but our pastor says directly as if it is from God.

²⁸ Belenky et al., 24.

Similar to Belenky et al.'s silent women, for Okja "to hear" the Word of God and the words of preachers is "to obey,"²⁹ seeing these two authorities "as being all-powerful" and "overpowering."³⁰

Given this background, it was amazing to observe Okja's improvement in speaking. In the fourth workshop, she talked for 15 minutes out of 150 of the entire group session. During the mid-evaluation, Okja explained her experience of speaking in front of the group.

I rarely talk in other places. I do not know how to talk. But here everyone understands me... The teacher draws my thoughts out of me. I feel relaxed and comfortable here, and the words are just popping out of me. The teacher understands the *shimjung* of the students.

Okja's case shows the several factors that empowered her to speak. One factor is a teacher who "draws things out of" her and "understands the *shimjung* of the students."³¹

Okja's comment, "everyone understands me," provided another clue for what made her relaxed and comfortable. It was the women only group that empowered Okja to speak.

In the last workshop, Okja said, "if there were men in our group, I probably would not speak like this." The women only group played a factor for the lively discussions.

Soonhee also commented,

I felt comfortable talking in a women only group. Women understand one another, which men cannot do. Men could judge us for what we say.

²⁹ Belenky et al., 28.

³⁰ Ibid., 27. On the other hand, Okja does not really fit into a category of Belenky et al.'s silent women who are capable of learning neither from "their own experience" nor "from the words that others use." Ibid., 26. I observed that Okja repeated what the pastors said and sometimes made independent judgments about what she heard from the pastors.

³¹ Okja's description of the teacher exactly parallels Belenky et al.'s "midwife" teachers who "draw [knowledge in the learner's head] out." Ibid., 217.

I provided the impetus for free and lively discussions because I was a female teacher. I was able to know Okja's *shimjung* and to draw things out of her mainly because I was a woman. The final evaluation indicates that the student participants felt more relaxed and comfortable with the female teacher and was able to speak honestly about the women's issues.

According to Belenky et al., talking "things over with a sympathetic, nonjudgmental person with similar experiences" helps women to make transitions from the "received" to "subjective" phase of knowing.³² But it must be noted that the expectation of female teachers to be automatically "nurturing" could be a form of sexism.³³ The field observation at SKPC provided me with a different view on female teachers. Once in a women only group meeting, a female discussion leader talked by herself for the entire meeting while not allowing anyone to say a word. This incident led me to realize that female group leaders are not necessarily nurturing other women's voices but need to be trained to do so.

With Tears and Laughter: "It Is O.K. to Cry Here"

Human development is an emotional development, according to RCT. Emotion, empathy, and affective way of knowing play critical roles in five educational theories I examined. I observed the active workings of emotions, especially the Korean culture-specific emotions of *han*, *jung*, and *shimjung*, in the group. In following three sections, I will explore the workings of emotions and their effects on the group dynamics.

³² Belenky et al., 60.

³³ Maher and Tetreault, 135.

We started the first workshop with lots of tears and laughter. It was Minjoo who first broke into tears. Then, Sunhee began to weep as well.

Sunhee: My name is Sunhee. I have been attending church without knowing anything. I have signed up for this workshop because I was envious to be in such activity. (with tears)

Joohee: Such envy is a good thing, and it's from God.

Sunhee: It's hard to be faithful. (tears) I also wanted to read the Bible more. (tears)

Joohee: ...It's full of Grace and emotions from the beginning of workshop... (all laughs)

Sunhee: Prayer is a hard thing for me... I don't know how to pray.

Rose: God knows your heart and the shortcomings.

Sunhee: I don't have a husband.

Sunhee's self-exposure, expressing her true feelings such as envy, sadness, and loneliness, was unexpected. Joohee and Rose tried to explain Sunhee's emotions away and the others looked away in order not to embarrass her. When Sunhee blurted out "I don't have a husband," no one paid attention to her while busy talking among themselves. I felt urged to respond to Sunhee, "I too was without a husband for 20 years." I was leading the group based on a principle of mutual impacts. According to Judith V. Jordan, mutual response does not require the teacher "to share all her life experiences or all spontaneous emotional reactions."³⁴ However, I made a decision to make such self-exposure as the teacher, wanting to let Sunhee know that she had an impact on me and hopefully on the others. Such "authenticity" and "responsiveness" on my part helped

³⁴ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 51.

create a more "relational context."³⁵ As a result, the group dynamic began to shift with another self-exposure by Hanna.

Hanna: God will reveal to one who loves God. God says "my daughter whom I love." I have cried every time when I hear such voice.

Sunhee: I sometime cry during the worship. (tears)

Hanna: That's grace of God. It's great grace.

Okja: (putting arms around Sunhee) That's a time of grace.

Sunhee: ...when I came to America, I began attending church, following my aunt. (tears continue) I cried a lot during the worship.

Soonhee: I think it is your time of God's grace.

I thought this was the appropriate time for me to let everyone know that emotional expressions are allowed in our class and we should attend one another's feelings. I said, "you can cry if you want in this workshop. It is okay to cry here." Then, the other women joined in the affirmation.

Soonhee: Crying shows that our weaknesses are revealed to God. Crying is from deep within our heart, and it is an instrument of God's grace. Cry if you want, sister.

Hanna: Yes, indeed, we are weak.

Joohee: My name is Joohee. I want to believe I am the one God so loves because God leads me to Jesus Christ who is the way and the life... (breaking into tears)

Rose: What's going on? Crying again? (all laugh)

Hanna, Okja, and Soonhee grounded Sunhee's crying in the language of God's grace. In our class, exposing weaknesses and negative emotions was not seen as the lack of faith, which is typical among the Korean Christians, but as a sign of faith. This was a critical

³⁵ Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 51.

moment to implement one of my seven relational principles, that is, the attending of emotions.

Sharing Jung and Han in Women Only Group: "There Isn't Much Jung in Our Lives"

While introducing themselves to the group, Minjoo, Sunhee, and Joohee cried with no apparent reasons, and the rest of the participants also showed their own tears. Such emotional explosions perplexed me since those happened even before I knew all the names of the participants. At first, I interpreted this phenomenon as the working of culture specific, Korean concept of *han*. According to Simone Sunghae Kim,

han, as an accumulated feeling of sorrow, pain, and deep bitterness that comes from being unjustly treated and abused for a long period of time, is unique to Korean women... Korean women's han is caused by the combinations of historical, political, economical, social, and cultural oppressions that are unique to Korean women. Korean North American women not only suffer from Korean culture, but also from the racial oppression from North American culture as well.³⁶

In their cries, I could sense *han* as a bottled up feelings inside the women. However, I did not know exactly what factors caused *han* for each woman. In a member checking session, I shared my interpretation with Kumhee and Rose. Kumhee agreed with my interpretation by saying,

Korean women are usually weak and passive. There are a lot of stress from husbands and child-bearing bottled up as *han* inside of them. The women's workshop like this provides an avenue to let those out, and we all gladly pour them out.

³⁶ Simone Sunghae Kim, "Psychological Contours of Multicultural Feminist Hermeneutics: Han and Relationality," *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no.6 (January 2007): 725.

However, Elder Rose interpreted the cries as a phenomenon of *jung*, another major "relational emotions for Korean people" along with *han*.³⁷ She argued,

our random comments to one another touched us with deep *jung*. These days, it is difficult to express our feelings, but in our sessions we were able to reveal our inner most thoughts. That was another way for us to love and express *jung*.

In my exchange with Rose, I arrived at two important realizations. First, the working of *jung* was the major factor for women's emotional presence in the group. Women's expression of *han* was possible only in such a warm and safe environment of *jung*, which exists in our we-ness relationships as Korean, female Christians. Second, there were both *jung* and *han* at work. *Jung* and *han* are like two sides of the coin since "*han* arises when 'personal relatedness is neglected and disconnected.'"³⁸ *Han* arises when *jung* is neglected and lost. Rose felt regretful for her missed opportunities for *jung* in America since "there really isn't much *jung* in [her] lives." Women's tears hint at the possibility that their missed opportunities to express *jung* caused much *han* for them. Women's cries can be interpreted as an expression of such *han* of lost *jung* as well as the joy to finally find a place to experience *jung* where they can let go of their *han*.

Sharing Shimjung : Feeling Heart to Heart

The following shows the group interaction which took place during the faith-drawing activity in week three. The participants were asked to draw a representative

³⁷ Yohan Ka, "Jeong-han as a Korean Culture-bound Narcissism: Dealing with Jeong-han Through Jeong-Dynamics," *Pastoral Psychology* 59, no. 2 (April 2010): 222.

³⁸ Ka, 222, citing Soo-Young Kwon, "Codependence and Interdependence: Cross-Cultural Reappraisal of Boundaries and Relationality," *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 1 (September 2001):46.

scene of their life and explain their drawing by using the personal pronouns of "I" and "God."

Minjoo: This picture is about a room where I stayed during my college years. This is when I transferred to another school and needed much prayer... It was easier for me to find time in the morning during sunrise to pray and read the Bible and meditate. This period really helped me (tears)³⁹

Soonhee: It's okay to cry.

Minjoo: Those times really gave me strength as it felt God was behind me and protecting me. I miss those quiet moments with God by myself. (tears) (Minjoo's four year old son kept nagging her and Joohee tried to get the son out of the room and take him to Minjoo's husband.)

Hanna: I had the same period of hopeless daily cycles where I regretted getting married. But those times will pass, and God will provide a time to take care of yourself in God's time.

Kumhee: I too had a similar period during raising of my two kids when I had to cry once a month to relive the stress of daily life.

Hanna: Crying helps. I too cried a lot. I had to take care of two boys and a husband, three men. Everyone has that critical moment. I think this is that moment for you.

Rose: I too had a busy life raising two kids with education and rides... I cried many times because it was too stressful, but my husband did not understand why I was crying.

Kumhee: We all had similar experiences and difficult periods.

I was stunned by the women's perceptiveness. Minjoo did not reveal much of her private life, other than saying she missed her time of solitude. However, even without hearing the details, the women *knew* what Minjoo tried to say from her tears. Sympathetic responses poured in. This is one place where a culture specific concept *shimjung* can be used as the interpretive key. According to Simone Sunghae Kim, *shimjung* can be seen not only as a culture-specific but as the gendered experience. She argues, "the *han-*

³⁹ For Minjoo's faith-drawing, look at Appendix A.

ridden spirit of a Korean woman can possess much richer and thicker characteristic of *shimjung*" than a Korean man.⁴⁰ She also argues that it is more likely that Koreans engage "in *shimjung* exchange with the person of the same gender."⁴¹ The active *shimjung* exchanges among the Korean women would not have happened if there were a man in the group. Crying was a common experience when the women shared the *shimjung* as the fellow sufferers who had "similar experiences and difficult periods," as Kumhee realized.

Empowered to Be Angry after Mourning

After studying female victims in the Bible, I asked the participants to engage in the relay prayers by completing a sentence, "I (a participant's name) remember the sufferings and pains of (the name of a female victim in the Bible the participant chose) and mourn for her."⁴² Then, the rest of us were supposed to say in unison, "we remember (the named female victim) for her sufferings and pains and mourn for

⁴⁰ Simone Kim, 76 .

⁴¹ Ibid., 76. However, I do not agree with Kim's argument that Korean women's expression of *shimjung* is "with a less serious and lighter tone, than a heart-to-heart *shimjung* exchange between two equals or two men." Ibid. The women in the study experienced heart-to-heart *shimjung exchanges* with Minjoo, which were serious and solemn.

⁴² The discussion on female victims builds on Phyllis Tribble's "three approaches to the study of women in Scripture," particularly the third approach which is to retell "sympathetically the stories of terror about women." Phyllis Tribble, "Feminist Hermeneutics," 28.

her." This was a simple exercise but the effect was very powerful. Through this "ritual mourning" exercise, the participants began talking about the reality of Korean women being treated unfairly.⁴³

Soonhee: I imagine myself suffering like those women. There still are women who are suffering today.

Rose: Society and faith ask a lot from women today.

Joohee: Just because we are women.

This response can be interpreted as the power of empathy and anger. What caused the caring response in Soonhee, "there still are women who are suffering today," was the formula, "I remember (a female biblical victim)'s sufferings and pains ...and mourn for her." This formula necessitated the participants to use their empathy, which was close to Nel Noddings' idea of "feeling with," "reception," or "engrossment."⁴⁴ Soonhee chose to remember and mourn for the "unnamed" concubine of Levite in Judges 19:1-2.⁴⁵ At the end of the prayer, she added "I would be miserable if I were her." This comment points at Soonhee's engagement with the unnamed women's story in a "feeling with" mode or a "receptive" state where she was allowed "to receive the other[the unnamed concubine]

⁴³ A ritual mourning exercise is adapted from Maria Harris, *Women and Teaching Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 46-59. According to Harris, "ritual mourning" is powerful in "healing" and educating when it is done in a communal setting and "in formal and structural ways." Ibid., 57.

⁴⁴ Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 30.

⁴⁵ This unnamed women in Judges 19:1-30 was one of the female victims in the Bible we discussed. She was betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, and dismembered. Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terrors: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65.

into [herself]," trying to "see and feel with the other."⁴⁶ It must be Soonhee's "feeling with" the unnamed woman that brought about her caring response for the contemporary women who are suffering similar fates as the unnamed woman.

Noddings is not alone in emphasizing the connection between caring and feeling.⁴⁷ Beverly Wildung Harrison also stresses the relationship between "responsible moral action" and feeling. She argues,

feeling is the basic bodily ingredient that mediates our connection to the world. All power, including intellectual power, is rooted in feeling. If feeling is damaged or cut off, our power to image the world and act into it is destroyed and our relationality is impaired.⁴⁸

It was through the power of feeling or empathy that Soonhee made a connection to the unnamed woman in the biblical world and then to all other suffering women in this world today. Our ritual mourning exercise ended with Joohee's resentful comment.

There is a Korean proverb, "the house will perish when a hen crows." That proverb was in my mind for awhile as we were discussing the injustices for and unfair sacrifices of women today. We have to endure all of them because we are women. I have been living in the old Confucian belief about the submissive wife as I was taught from my mother-in-law who still controls my life as I am already in my 50's. We are not living in a fair society for women.

It may sound unbiblical and ironical if I view Joohee's resentment positively. But it ought not. Harrison asserts,

anger is a mode of connectedness to others and it is always a vivid form of caring... Anger is... a sign of some resistance in ourselves to the moral quality of the social

⁴⁶ Noddings, *Caring*, 30.

⁴⁷ Noddings argues that "feeling is not all that is involved in caring, but it is essentially involved" Ibid., 32.

⁴⁸ Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 13.

relations in which we are immersed. Extreme and intense anger signals a deep reaction to the action upon us or toward others to whom we are related.⁴⁹

Accordingly, what I saw in her resentment was the possibilities of "change" and "transformation," which will soon follow.⁵⁰ This exercise supports one of the seven relational principles that stresses the attending of both positive and negative emotions with care.

Empowered to Speak through Use of Experience

There had been a number of lively, passionate discussions during the workshops. Among them are the "giving tree" exercise and the case debate on a mother's decision making of her daughter's divorce. I identify the use of students' experiential knowledge in the classroom as the most critical factor for these two lively discussions. These discussions dealt with Korean women's existential problems that they were facing or are likely to face, regarding sacrificing themselves for their children or making faith based judgment for their daughter's divorce. Such relevant scenarios generated the enthusiasm, zest, and passion. I will discuss these two exercises, exploring the important effects and problems that resulted from the use of students' experiences.

Through Use of Life Experience in Giving Tree Exercise: Empowered toward Ownership

When I was invited to Elder Rose's house, I saw a book, *The Giving Tree*, laying on the table.⁵¹ I asked her if she can tell the story for the group and she agreed.

⁴⁹ Harrison, 14.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁵¹ Shel Silverstein, *The Giving Tree* (New York: HarperCollins, 1964).

Rose: There was a beautiful tree with full of healthy leaves. A boy played under the shadow of this tree. When the boy grew up to be an adult but did not have any money, the tree offered its apples for him to sell. When he did not have a house, the tree offered its branches and the lumber for the house. When the boy became old and did not want to stay around the tree, it offered its tree trunk for the boat for him to enjoy boating. When the old boy came back, there was nothing to give from the tree, but the tree offered the old boy to sit at the top of the trunk and rest. The tree was happy. The tree gave everything to the boy until the end. This is same as love of Jesus.

Most participants are in their 50's or 60's. As with most Korean women in their age, whether to give all they have to their children is one of important life dilemmas they are facing. This life relevancy motivated them to speak passionately. The participants' use of life experience did not just bring about the passion but empowered them to take the ownership of the class. According to Maher and Tetreault, the students' use of experiential knowledge has an effect to redistribute "expertise" and to widen the "sources of authority."⁵² The use of experiential knowledge brought about the power-reversal between the teacher and student-participants. During these discussions, they were the true owners of the class.

Limit of Experience: Hard to Go beyond What Is Given

During the giving tree exercise, the limit of experiential knowledge became evident. Experiential knowledge did not guarantee the students to move beyond the conventional thoughts toward the critical. According to Paulo Freire, a critical educator, the progression from "knowledge made from experience alone" toward "criticalness"

⁵² Maher and Tetreault, 58.

does "not take place automatically."⁵³ This was what happened when I introduced the giving tree exercise to the group. When asked, Rose retold the giving tree story in her own words and, at the end, she added her own interpretation, "The tree gave everything to the boy until the end. This is same as the love of Jesus." I asked the women.

Na: Does anyone think your life is like this giving tree?

Soonhee: I am not yet like that tree, but I have the constant thought of wishing to become that kind of tree. If anyone benefits from my giving of shade and if I can give comfort to a weary soul and provide better life, then I would like to have that.

Hanna: Most parents would want to be like that kind of tree to their children. Even if you cannot be that giving tree to everyone, at least to your children, you want to provide a resting place. That is mother's heart.

Several participants followed Rose's interpretive cue, saying that they want to live a life of the giving tree in relation to their children. Their responses went against my intention to problematize Korean women's inordinate sacrifices for children. Apparently, there was a gap between the participants' "common sense" understanding and my critical understanding of women's giving to their children.⁵⁴

Encountering this difference, I decided to challenge them by asking if they have "any desire to receive anything in turn?" This challenge is in line with the critical educator, Ira Shor's assertion that starting from students' experience is not to "merely exploit or endorse the given" but "to challenge" it in order to "transcend it."⁵⁵ According to Shor, starting from students' "daily life experience," "concreteness," or "common

⁵³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Indignation*, (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 90. Instead, according to Freire, this progression must occur through "methodologically rigorous procedures."

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1987), 104.

sense," aims at reaching "rigorous"⁵⁶ or "critical view on reality" through what Shor calls "extraordinary reexperiencing the ordinary."⁵⁷ However, the initial challenge was not well received as it is evident in the following responses.

Hanna: Yes, there is desire to receive, but the desire to give is a lot more than receive.

Rose: The giving tree reminds me of God's love. I feel frustrated whenever I find myself not being able to live the life of giving tree, although I want to live the life of giving so badly...

At this point, I decided to do what Shor calls "second-level problem posing," by "synthesiz[ing] and represent[ing] student responses" in order to encourage the student-participants to think critically "about their thinking."⁵⁸ I asked,

it seems everyone believe that the ideal thing is to be a giving tree, living a life of giving, and that to do so is what God wants you to do. But what happens if giving to others conflicts with looking after yourselves? Would you think that it is a healthy life?... There is no guarantee you will receive the same, in return, from your children. Would you be ready if that happens?

This second problem-posing redirected our discussion to another phase, beginning with Okja who admitted,

I do feel the desire to receive in return... I sacrificed my interest while giving all to the children, but now I have the desire to get back what I have sacrificed... I wish to teach my children to give it back in return. I need to learn to receive.

The giving tree discussion ended with the students' increasing critical view on Korean women's giving.

⁵⁶ Shor and Freire, 106.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁵⁸ Ira Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 241-42.

Through Use of Experiential Knowledge [Virtual Case Debate]: Empowered to Become Practical Thinkers

The participants' use of the experiential knowledge in the group discussion enabled them to become practical, flexible, and sophisticated theological thinkers, which was most evident during the divorce debate. The following fictitious case was presented to the group.

A mother who is a faithful Christian and her married daughter visit the senior pastor for a consultation about getting divorce because the daughter's husband beats her. The pastor emphatically advises the daughter not to get divorce because God says, according to the Bible, no person can break a marriage, but rather, she should take up her cross and endure. How should the mother advise her daughter? How would you advise her if she was your daughter?

In the activity, the women were to put themselves in a role of mother who must make a decision about her daughter's divorce. The participants, who I assumed to be the received knowers, faced at least two challenges. They should not blindly accept the "right answers' from the authorities," the pastor's words and the Word of God.⁵⁹ In addition, they had to deal with the literal reading of the Bible concerning two biblical injunctions, not to divorce and to take up one's cross.

The result was unexpected. The majority of the women agreed that the violence should not be tolerated and the divorce may be an option in a case of extreme violence. Okja said, "I cannot ask my daughter to take up her cross since I knew how much sufferings she has to endure." By this decision, most women showed that they will not blindly accept the pastor's advice. They overcame the literal interpretation of the biblical injunctions about the divorce and sacrifice. According to Belenky et al., received knowers are "literal," not being able to "read between the lines" and being "intolerant of

⁵⁹ Belenky et al., 39.

ambiguity."⁶⁰ In contrast to this description of the received knowers, however, the women raised differing opinions, and the ambiguities were greatly tolerated. Moreover, Hanna displayed a practical reasoning ability about why pastors cannot give a pro-divorce advice, arguing that the "responsibilities for the divorce would fall on the pastor later." As the discussion involved an existential, experiential question, the women showed themselves to be flexible and practical thinkers.

Multi-purposes of Teacher's Use of Experiential Knowledge

bell hooks encourages not only the students but the teacher to use their own experiences or "personal" and "confessional" narratives in the classroom.⁶¹ This suggestion is in harmony with the tenet of mutuality advocated by RCT, feminist educators, and PAR. Accordingly, I tried to use my personal narratives during the workshop. The followings are two of such instances.

I was engulfed in the fear of God before. After a number of trials in my life, I had promised to serve God by going to seminary. Because of the promise, I enrolled in the seminary. I believed God may strike me if I did not go to seminary. It all worked out beautifully for my life at the end, but I have been constantly struggling to free myself from the image of God who punishes and find a new image of God who does not. As of now, I am somewhat free from the fearful God, but not completely. I would like for us to think about the fears we have of God who punishes.

Have you ever thought why God is always imagined as an old and grey grandfather? It's shocking, isn't it? It was very strange and unnatural to me in the beginning that God can be thought of as "mother." However, there was a difficult period where I felt my mother's arm holding me in my dream comforting me. It felt like God's arm that was protecting me. Has anyone experience anything similar?... Could you relate such a character of mother to God? At least in dream, I had experienced it.

⁶⁰ Belenky et al., 42.

⁶¹ hooks, 148.

My confessional narratives served several functions. In the first quote, the use of a personal narrative related to my own struggles, doubts, and confusions, aimed to empower the students by letting them know that they were not alone in their struggles. This kind of self-exposure makes the teacher vulnerable. But it could be "a powerful learning experience" to the students.⁶² According to Belenky et al., what woman students need is not the "models of impeccable reasoning" but the "models of thinking as a human, imperfect, and attainable activity."⁶³ The successful overcoming of a struggle at the end of my story could serve as a model for other women to join in the journey toward more mature faith, no matter how imperfect or vulnerable we are.

The second quote served another important function to alleviate the students' resistance when I introduced unconventional feminist ideas or concepts such as Mother God. God the Mother is a topic that has been one of the taboos for Korean Christians. This is one of the issues that divides Korean churches. But introducing such a controversial topic by telling my own experience of Mother God's arm rather than directly introducing it as an idea or concept, I allowed the participants to "acquire vicarious experience" and thereby broaden their knowledge "through empathy."⁶⁴ This is typical of connected knowing, the primary purpose of which is "not to judge but to understand."⁶⁵ Remarkably, the participants did not show any immediate signs of resistance or disruption at the experiential story of Mother God.

⁶² Belenky et al., 216.

⁶³ Ibid., 216, 217.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 116.

Empowered to Speak through Teacher's Form Giving

Maria Harris, through her threefold emphasis, stresses the centrality of form or design.⁶⁶ In teaching the workshop, I learned that the form really matters. The success of divorce discussion was in part by the power of form-giving. The divorce debate adopted a specific form called "case study method," which typically "[presents] description of a particular situation" and asks the students to "reflect on the situation presented" in order to "come to some judgment or decision regarding action."⁶⁷ According to Moore, the case study method has the power to "*defy oversimplification or overgeneralization*" since

cases actually heighten the paradox between particular realities and generalizations so that each can challenge the other. In this way, cases can contribute to forming and re-forming generalizations; they also offer persistent reminders that the generalizations are never final or complete.⁶⁸

It was the power of the case study method that forced the participants to look for diverse solutions.

I will examine two more exercises. These are, the imaginative dramatizations of ten virgins in Matthew 25 and prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. The two exercises asked each participant to imagine herself as an actress in each story. This form of learning brought much laughter, fun, and enthusiasm into the classroom, which strengthened a sense of community among the participants. More importantly, it empowered the women toward the critical and creative theological thinkers.

⁶⁶ Harris, *Teaching*, 167.

⁶⁷ Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, *Teaching from the Heart: Theology and Educational Method* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

Ten Virgins Exercise: Empowered to Talk Back

The following is a brief description of ten virgin exercise.

The participants were asked to choose a side, *either* in a group of virgins that are saved or in the other group of virgins that are not. Then, they were asked to imagine themselves in the situation they chose, experiencing what is happening through their senses and trying to converse with Jesus and the other people around them. After completing the exercise, they were asked to present the experience to the group.

The following excerpts are part of women's feedbacks to the group after completing their imaginative dramatization.

Joohee: I asked Jesus if he could save my family, husband's family, and the relatives. It gave me a heavy heart when I thought about them as they needed to be saved. I also argued with Jesus as they were my brothers and sisters who should be in heaven and experience the joy with me. I begged Jesus to give them faith for their salvation.

Rose: Before I get into heaven, I will take all ten brides with me. I will help those five lazy brides who had not prepared the oil for the lamps and any others who were not prepared. We all will enter the heaven together. No one is to be left behind. Then in heaven, I want to ask Jesus why he was in the earth for only 33 years and were there any other way for him to save us without himself dying for us? I also want to ask him if there were anything we could have done to prevent him from dying.

During the workshop, many of the participants said, "we just read the Bible," "we read the words of Bible as they are." This implies, "the Bible only speaks to them and [the women] do not talk back."⁶⁹ However, Joohee, in her imaginative enactment of the story "argued with" Jesus and "begged" Jesus to change his decisions about the salvation of each individual. By talking back to Jesus in the story, Joohee was "'talking' back to the biblical material," unconsciously "questioning or even judging it."⁷⁰ Rose's talking back to the Bible takes more active and aggressive form as she said, "I will take all ten brides

⁶⁹ Hess, 194.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

with me." She did not try to bargain with Jesus for others' salvation. Rather, she acted to save them by herself. These kinds of talking back or daring act would never happen in a Korean traditional type of Bible teaching where women were expected to obediently receive the words from their pastors as the Word of God. It was the power of form giving.

The two imaginative exercises are considered as the embodied form of learning. Embodied forms, according to Maria Harris, are "teaching forms where bodiliness is the means and the stuff of teaching."⁷¹ Imaginative dramatization has the bodily basis involving the whole person with feelings and senses. This embodied type of activity is often considered as an activity for having fun only, not for serious theological reflection. We did enjoy listening to one another's imaginative plays. But there was more to it than just fun. In the women's *imaginative* reenactments of the story, I saw their potentials to become *critical*, theological thinkers. Joohee and Rose in their concerns for the salvations of others echo a feminist theologian Elizabeth Lee Thomsen's criticism,

how can the bridegroom and the in-group of guests be seen as "successful" when the community is shattered?⁷²

Although not yet turned into the critical knowledge, there were the seeds of critical thoughts in Joohee's and Rose's concerns for the salvations of others. The possibility of imaginative, intuitive, body-based activities leading to critical thinking is implicit in Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel's idea of "embodiment" which refers to

⁷¹ Harris, *Teaching*, 55.

⁷² Elizabeth Lee Thomsen, "Women Studying the Bible: Footsteps on the Road from Past to Present," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 1995), 57.

a 'basic epistemological concept' which escapes the separation of reality into subject and object, into analytical thought and the intuition of feeling.⁷³

The imaginative, bodily form of teaching and learning supports the critical thinking.

Prodigal Daughter Exercise: Empowered to Think Creatively

The embodied form of teaching has the strong potential to instigate the critical thinking, which often goes beyond the conventional thinking. The following is a brief description of prodigal daughter exercise.

The participants were to choose either the role of prodigal *daughter* or a *mother* of prodigal son. They were instructed to imagine a situation they chose, experience the situation with their bodily senses, and share it with the group.

After her imaginative re-experiencing of the story of prodigal son, Insook reported the following.

I imagined myself as the prodigal daughter... I imagined myself coming back home after realizing I was wrong and believing my mother would take me back where my father would never accept me again. My mother hid me from my father after my return because he would probably beat me badly. But my mother, despite her heartache, hid me and accepted me as the same way our father God would make our sin as white as snow, no matter how red it was. I see the similarity between my mother's heart and Father God's heart. My earthly father would never take me back unless my mother in time convinces my father to take me back.

Insook identified Father God with her mother rather than her father. She was not confused between the Father God and her own physical father. Considering most Koreans' obsessions with God the Father, her ability to imagine God in a female figure, that is, her physical mother is worthy of attention. Rose's question after the ten virgin activity, "if there were anything we could have done to prevent [Jesus] from dying," is also beyond the conventional thinking. This question could easily be developed into a

⁷³ Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *I am My Body: New Ways of Embodiment*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1994), 86.

feminist question about Jesus' salvific death on the cross. The embodied and imaginative forms of knowing proved to be effective in helping women to think as the creative theological thinkers often crossing over the conventional interpretations and general beliefs.

When the Silence Occurred? Content Interfering with Process

Throughout the workshops, there had been good times filled with passion and enthusiasm. But there were also times when we experienced conflicts, diminished voices or participation, and visible lack of enthusiasm. The conflicts among us became visible for the first time when Joohee challenged me at the end of the fifth workshop referring me as "you," "academic," and "feminist." This incident happened when we shifted to the theme of Christian symbols of God. On that day, I introduced Maria Rizzuto's notion of images of God by presenting the results of God image survey, which was conducted two weeks ago as a class assignment.

This first incident of visible conflict was caused by the specific topic of "God" as hinted by Soonhee's phrases, "the God I knew was pure and simple but the God we came to see through the workshop ...is much broader..." Soonhee said that she was worried about her "God" being "diluted." By "diluted," she meant contaminated. A closer examination of the workshop transcripts confirms my suspicion that it was indeed about "God." I selected five incidents where I felt a strong sense of disconnection from the students. These incidents are related to the topic of God.

When Teacher Touched the Untouchable

Father of Our Flesh vs. Father God The Word

The following discussion occurred in the sixth workshop after the initial introduction of Rizzuto's idea of God images a week earlier. I questioned,

when we call God "the Father," could our understanding of God be influenced by our perception of our biological and physical father? For example, unlike many Korean fathers, fathers in Western culture participate actively in nurturing their children. In that case, can Western people's naming God "father" mean something different from us, Koreans?

I expected the question to bring out a lively discussion, assuming that the participants understand the difference between God and God images. But the response was unexpected.

Hanna: Culture may affect our perception of God at the beginning of our faith. But as our faith matures, the Father God appeals to me strongly. The old memory of my physical father has totally gone and only the Father God occupies my mind completely.

Insook: Is God the Father much different from the real physical father? Maybe, they are different because of their different characters (murmuring to herself). I think God the Father has all the good characters of physical father. He is firm and yet kind, loving but just. Instead of separating them, it seems better to think that God the Father has every good thing that a physical father has and more.

Rose: Are you saying you serve both God the Father and physical father at once?

Hanna: (look upset and offended) If we say "Father God," how does our physical father is connected?

Soonhee: I don't think the physical father can be compared to Father God.

The discussion ended abruptly with confused, upset, and even angry comments. Five of nine participants went into silence. Apparently, the women did not understand the difference between God and God images. In her murmuring, Insook displayed her burgeoning understanding of the connection and difference between God the Father and

the earthly father. However, the rest of the women did not have a clue about the idea of God images.

A God with Two Hands

In the last evaluation session, I questioned, "has anyone changed your view of God after the workshops?" Okja responded positively,

when you showed a picture of prodigal son's return, the outstretched arm of father had both man's and woman's hands. As I saw a woman's hand, I felt that women can do as much as men in God's world.

Okja's answer affirms the feminist conviction about the relationship between women's oppression and the male dominated, Christian symbol system. Seeing the picture of God with woman's hand had an empowering effect on Okja, which made her realize that "women can do as much as men." Unlike Okja, however, the rest of participants responded sarcastically.

Rose: Whether there are lightening or not, God is God. That's all.

Soonhee: Maybe I am insensitive. Such a fruitful session should have brought many changes in me, but it did not. Questioning who is God made me uncomfortable.

Rose: It's strange.

The discussion ended suddenly. Four participants said nothing good or bad. However, Soonhee's comment that questioning who God is made her "uncomfortable" offers a clue for the unresponsiveness on the part of participants. I touched the untouchable! In our member checking session, Kumhee confirmed my interpretation.

These women were in complete denial. They just closed their ears. Your words fell on their deaf ears. You touched the untouchable.

Kumhee also offered another clue for the participants' closed-mindedness.

We seem to get defensive because we feel guilty about learning new things or knowing untraditional faith. It is important for us to be able to discern whether new ideas are sinful, or useful in knowing more about God. Discerning whether it is poison or medicine is also important as it could benefit if we can accept it with a grain of salt.

Kumhee pointed out the guilty feelings among the students. Surely, there were the elements of fear and guilt in both teaching and learning new ideas and thoughts about God. I will further examine these factors in following instances.

A Korean Looking Jesus

In the sixth workshop, the pictures of Jesus in Korean traditional costume and Korean looking face were introduced with Korean gospel songs. The initial responses from the participants were hardly welcoming. But at the end, these pictures received many positive comments.

Na: We've all heard such song before, but what about the pictures of Jesus in Korean costume? What's your first impression?

Soonhee: It's traditional Korean.

Na: Does Jesus feel closer to you, or is it awkward?

Insook: It's something new and looks like a traditional Korean drama.

Hanna: Bit strange looking.

Joohee: It looks more symbolic than realistic.

Soonhee: It seems to be like a traditional painting by a famous artist like Kim Hong Do (17th Century Korean artist).

Na: The picture I just showed you was actually painted by Kim Ki-chang, a famous, Korean contemporary artist. I heard that it is once displayed in the Korean Christian Woman Association building.

All: Ah... I see.

Hanna: He has very strong faith.

Soonhee: Now that I see more, it looks good. If I had seen that picture when I first accepted Jesus as the savior, then I would probably more comfortable seeing it.

Insook: I am getting used to it.

Soonhee: We are probably more familiar with this image than the Western image.

Okja: I heard other cultures do the same with the images of Jesus. Each culture paints Jesus reflecting its own culture.

Na: If Jesus was born in Korea, he would have looked that way.

Soonhee: Even though he was not born Korean, we can draw Jesus as a Korean because we are Korean.

This noticeable change in the students' receptivity to Korean looking Jesus occurred after I informed them about the painter and where the picture was hung. With Hanna's affirmation, "the painter has very strong faith," as a signal, the rest of the women joined in giving positive comments. I suspect that the women changed their attitudes since they were provided with two strong credentials. The first credential was the painter's true identity as a person of strong faith. The second was the fact that his drawings were once displayed on the wall of Korean Christian Women Association Building, which implies the association recognized the religious value of his drawings. These two credentials seemed to lift the women's fear of the unknown and their sense of guilt for seeing Jesus differently.

When Students Were Entrenched in the Old

The following two episodes offer more clues about the participants' unreceptiveness toward new feminist ideas. The first episode titled "A God who strikes," occurred in the week six and the second episode titled "Sinner or God's lover?" in the week seven. Two episodes share one important commonality. They involve two of the most deeply entrenched Christian beliefs, humanity as the sinner and God who punishes.

A God Who Strikes

The God image survey was conducted by using Maria Rizzuto's survey form as a class assignment. I reported the result of survey analysis to the group, which revealed the women's fear about "God who punishes" or "strikes."

Joohee: Because the Holy Spirit is the Person who respects us, unless we affirm and invite into our heart, the Holy Spirit cannot just barge into our lives. I believe God comes and flourishes in our hearts when we worship and lift up. God does not stay in our hearts all the time.

Na: If we refuse to let God into our hearts, then God cannot come in? If so, then there are things that God cannot do? (laugh)

Joohee: God can do everything. He is almighty.

Na: I thought you meant God cannot do everything. Not because God is incapable but because God respects us.

Joohee: That's right, not because God is incapable.

Soonhee: If we refuse the Holy Spirit, God won't do rather than cannot.

Na: Then, what about the idea that God punishes us when we do not obey God's will?

Hanna: God's punishment is a facet of love. If our children do not study and do whatever they want, that can lead them to destruction. Parents must do all that they can to prevent it and lead them to the right path.

Na: If so, free will is not being respected. The free will for children is not to study.

Joohee: The parents' responsibility is to try in their earnest to lead the children to the right path.

Na: The punishment from God is something forceful from God.

Hanna: It could be a forceful thing. If children go stray even with perfect environment for study, then we could use forceful punishment to correct that.

Most women defended vehemently the God who punishes, refusing to acknowledge the logical inconsistency in what they were saying. The member checking with Kumhee and

Rose helped me find a clue for the participants' insensitivity to their logical inconsistencies. Kumhee said,

if a level of logic increases just a bit, we get lost and could not follow. It is similar to a situation when we try to find a way out by driving in an unfamiliar road but get lost after making several turns. I thought I can follow you okay when I read the transcript together. But when I looked at it, I needed to reread carefully to understand what it means.

The participants' inability to see the inconsistency seems partially due to an increase in the logic, given the fact that they are not theologically trained. However, there can be another interpretation when this story is read in tandem with the following story.

Sinner or God's Lover

There has been a concern for potential harms that could be done to women when the human status as sinner is overemphasized. To lessen the impact, I tried to introduce the feminist idea of emphasizing human goodness before becoming the sinners.⁷⁴

Na: Feminist theologians say, we should emphasize the goodness of God's creation first. In other words, the message should have been ordered the goodness of God's creation first and then the sinful nature later. If human nature is originally good, then putting goodness first would place us in better status. Which is more encouraging? Saying, you are forgiven sinners, or you were originally created as beautiful human beings although now being tainted by sins.

[10 seconds of silence]

Which statement gives you more strength? You are tainted now, but you were originally created as good, or you are a meager creature destined to die but God saved you from the pit. Which statement motivates you more to become a better person? I am not asking for any right answer.

⁷⁴ Rita Nakashima Brock, "The Greening of the Soul: A Feminist Theological Paradigm of the Web of Life," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 135-36. Serene Jones also makes a similar suggestion in *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 94-125.

[15 seconds of silence]

Rose: It may be different for each person.

Na: Does the song, "You are born to be loved..." give you more grace than "Amazing grace... that saved a wretched like me"? Some feminist theologians suggest that we simply change the order of what we emphasize. Before pointing out that you are a sinner, if we say you are born to be loved by God first, then the confession of sin will come naturally by that person. How about just changing the order of what we stress? Which would motivate you to live more godly and faithfully?

Rose: I was born to be loved by God, but I do sin during my life. Therefore, I can help and love others by sharing my shortcomings and mistakes and can give better advices. Because God loves and because I accept with my open heart, I can help and encourage others.

Soonhee: We are not born at our will but, as in the Bible, God has something to do with creating us and sending us to this world. If we were sent here to please God, then we certainly deserve to be loved in this world.

[silence for 10 seconds]

Na: Is this theory bit difficult?

Soonhee: Yes, the question seems simple but the answer may take many directions.

The initial question did not work. There was a dead silence of 10 to 15 seconds, which was quite unusual. The answers usually came immediately before I finish the questions. No response forced me to offer the second question by rephrasing the same question with two popular Christian songs, "Amazing Grace" and "You are born to be loved." As a result, there were several responses. However, no one understood my question correctly. Later in the member checking session, Rose read this portion of the script. She laughed nervously and admitted, "I gave a completely irrelevant answer." Kumhee showed an open and favorable attitude toward the new feminist idea by agreeing that overemphasizing sin could be harmful to women. She recollected.

During the first church I went, I was depressed and felt very lonely since I had no one that I knew around me. Also, the message from the pastor was legalistic,

always pressing me to confess my sins. Such oppression made me think of myself as a terrible sinner. Consequently, I confessed daily what I had done wrong or what I should have done. That is why I like the message from Joel Osteen, "Power of Positive Thinking," which gave me strength.

Kumhee added, "in this regard, feminist theologians are doing a very good job." Her response was exactly what I was looking for. Unlike the topic of symbolic distortion of God which I expected much resistance, reversing the emphasis of sin and creation was the topic where I felt confident in receiving favorable responses from the participants. I felt perplexed from the unresponsiveness. The question lingered in my mind for awhile. When I saw the connection between the two episodes, I finally found an answer. The women were too entrenched in the old beliefs about God who punishes and themselves as sinners to understand the idea that God loved us first before we sinned.

Clues from My Two Sermons

Within a year that followed the workshops, I delivered two sermons titled "Not I But You! (1 Sam. 7)" and "Jesus' Invitation to Healing (John 4:4-26)" at SKPC. The responses from these two sermons partially answer my lingering question about the unreceptiveness. The sermon, "Not I, But You!" was about God who promised never to punish us, God's unconditional love. In the sermon, this image of unconditionally loving God was contrasted with our fear of God who strikes if we do not obey. After the message, an old woman approached and grabbed my hands and said,

I will never forget your sermon today for the rest of my life. My apartment got caught on fire 3 a.m. in this morning. It took two hours to get the fire out. I slept only two or three hours. But I came to the worship, fearing that if I do not come, God will punish me. Moreover, I felt urged to come to church in order to confess my sins. I must have done something bad for my house to burn.

During the workshops, my challenge toward the image of God who strikes caused much resistance from the participants. However, the same challenge was well received and appreciated when it was preached from the pulpit. Is it the power of the pulpit? Or is it because the congregation took my sermon as the "pure Word of God" and was not suspicious of the contamination by feminist ideologies?

The sermon on the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-26) adds a few more clues. The major motif of the sermon came from a feminist, alternative understanding of sin, that is, the sin of the "sinned-against"⁷⁵ which needs healing, rather than punishment.⁷⁶ As soon as I finished the sermon, Hanna told me with an excitement, "after the sermon, all the workshop contents started to come together and made sense to me." During the workshops, Hanna struggled to understand the new concept, the sin of sinned-against. Hanna's response made me realize that her inability to understand the concept had resulted from the lack of the teacher's explanation. The sermon consisted of many stories, all illuminating the central idea of the sin of sinned-against and much needed healing. Hanna should have heard more stories or explanations about new, unfamiliar concepts before deciding either liking or disliking them. Unfortunately, I tried to refrain myself from talking too much during the workshops for the fear of imposition.

⁷⁵ The expression was borrowed from "the sinned-against" of Andrew Sung Park and Susan L. Lelson, eds., introduction to *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). Among the seven feminist theologians, Nelson and Brock explore this idea of different kind of sins for the victims of others' sins.

⁷⁶ For the sermon, I drew on Frances Taylor Gench, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 109-35.

Consequently, I had unintentionally prevented the students from learning new ideas and thoughts. I should have spoken more.

Students' Silence because of Lack of Teacher' Stories

During the workshops, I encouraged the participants to tell their own stories. According to Carol P. Christ, stories and experience are dialectically interrelated as "stories give shape to experience, experience gives rise to stories."⁷⁷ Overall, the participants did an excellent job in telling their stories but I did not. The lack of teacher's stories is not a small factor since according to Carol Christ,

women have lived in the interstices between their own vaguely understood experience and the shapings given to experience by the stories of men. The dialectic between experience and shaping experience through story telling has not been in women's hands.⁷⁸

Korean women are very familiar with the Bible stories told by men. For example, the women heard about the Samaritan woman in male pastors' sermons that typically tagged her as the sinner, more precisely the "repented whore," not the sinned- against. To offset the age-old effects of hearing only men's stories, Korean women need to hear new and different stories told by women or from women's perspectives intensively and repeatedly. During the workshops, I told the stories as a woman teacher and from women's perspectives, but those were not enough to penetrate the hardened ideological shells of most women.

⁷⁷ Carol P. Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest*, 3rd ed, with a New Afterword (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Telling women's stories and experiences was more of the participants' mission while my primary role was to listen. It supported the goal of the workshop, that is, helping the participants to move toward the authentic voice, selfhood, and agency. To achieve this goal, the women needed to practice talking. In addition, my goal was not to teach the feminist ideas themselves. Rather, the goal was to help the women to reach deeper understandings of self, others, and God. Hence, I neglected to provide many more related stories that could have explained new feminist ideas better.

It was the negligence by necessity. Failing to tell many more stories, however, I underestimated the power of men's stories and the established male ideologies most Korean women have inscribed deep inside their hearts. This failure resembles the miscalculation by critical educators who

underestimate the power of the dominant, ignore the deep-seated presence of the oppressor in the oppressed.⁷⁹

I underestimated the importance of teaching the content(idea) itself. From the experience with Hanna, I have realized that the students need to understand the idea first in order to advance toward deeper encounters with the content. Teaching Korean women the new feminist ideas is a tough task especially when they are harboring the old thoughts provided by men's stories. Telling more stories and explanations could have helped the participants to better understand the unfamiliar, feminist ideas.

⁷⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, trans. Donald Macedo and Alexandre Oliveira (New York: Continuum, 1997), 66.

Silence Means Many Things

There are many different factors which contributed to silencing of the women. Two early dropouts were silenced by their sense of inadequacy because of the perceived power differentials among the participants. Elder Rose was silenced due to her different position on feminist ideas. The silence in Korean women's classroom can mean many things. Silence can mean the participants' unwillingness to open up or inability to understand new ideas. Silence can involve confusion, fear, or guilt feeling. The teacher's failure to provide adequate explanations about unfamiliar ideas can cause the silence. The analysis affirms the interrelationship between the *contents* and *process* of teaching. Some contents brought about much confusions, conflicts, and silence, as was seen in my teaching the image of God the Father who strikes and the image of humanity as the sinner. These contents directly influenced the group dynamics. hooks argues that the power of liberatory classrooms is the power of process.⁸⁰ But her argument seems to be exaggerated. The content of teaching matters a lot.

Belenky et al.'s concept "hidden multiplists" could explain the silence of Korean women. "Hidden multiplists" refer to women who silence their own voices because of the "fear of inadvertently offending or losing the other" and, therefore, "become the polite listeners, spectators."⁸¹ During the workshop, many women went into the silence whenever a conflict arose. Insook stood out as a hidden multiplist. Once Insook said,

ah, she may think differently, but I don't mind. There are many other ways of interpreting a view without being corrected. A freedom of thought!

⁸⁰ hooks, 153.

⁸¹ Belenky et al., 66.

I noticed a resemblance between Insook's comment and Belenky et al.'s description of hidden multiplists who

hear people out [believing that] everyone has their own opinion of things and should be allowed to speak, but that they are under no obligation to accept...⁸²

It is likely that Insook had missed the opportunities for learning, since "still[ing] their public voice," hidden multiplists are prevented

from finding mentors who might support their intellectual and emotional growth. Hidden multiplists can be silently alienated from the educational process.⁸³

Insook was not a multiplist in a strict sense because she turned into silence only when a conflict arose. She can be called an *opportunistic*, hidden multiplist.

Jung Ha Kim, a Korean professor of sociology, argues that "Korean churched women's silence [can] be interpreted not "as a sign of passivity" but as "a crucial survival strategy" and a "way of preserving a sense of control and freedom."⁸⁴ I do not find any pressing reasons for the women to remain silent for survival's sake in our voluntary, women only group. Jung Kim's idea of learned silence seems more applicable to the interactions between Korean women and men. However, it is still possible that learned behaviors like Korean women's silence can be naturally reactivated in any conflict. It is a judgment call to read Korean women's silence either as a sign of resistance or as a hidden multiplists' effort to hold connections to others.

⁸² Belenky et al., 66.

⁸³ According to Belenky et al., silent women cannot learn either "from their own experience" or from the words that others use. Ibid., 67.

⁸⁴ Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean-American Women and the Church* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 132.

Teaching Is Political

Focusing on teacher-student power dynamics as well as viewing education as the working of larger socio-cultural contexts, all feminist educators I examined are aware of the political nature of education. All but Hess explicitly draw on a critical, liberative pedagogy of Paulo Freire who is well known for his call for non-neutrality of education. Ira Shor, a critical educator, in his talking book with Freire, *A Pedagogy For Liberation*, argues for the political nature of teaching.

The teacher is unavoidably responsible for initiating the process and directing the study. Choosing goals makes neutrality impossible. By directing a course of study, by choosing certain books and by asking certain questions, and by the social relations of discourse in the class, every teacher expresses his or her political choice.⁸⁵

Shor explains how the neutrality of teachers or teaching is virtually impossible. If the act of teaching cannot help but becoming the political act, then the teachers' mission is to become thoroughly political. Otherwise, they fall into the victims by becoming unwanted accomplices in sustaining the status quo of society. Entering the research site with the agenda of women's leadership and adopting the PAR methodology with the Freirian emphasis on transformation, I was acknowledging the political nature of my research and teaching at SKPC. This political alertness had both positive and negative effects on the teaching.

⁸⁵ Shor and Freire, 157.

Teacher's Stretching Has Limits

During a group discussion, a method of stretching was used in order to help the participants "articulate and expand their latent knowledge."⁸⁶ However, I found it difficult to use the stretching ethically. When the stretching was used unilaterally for the teacher's probing the students, it became a handy tool in manipulating them. To illustrate this point, I reexamine the following group discussion where I was "probing" Joohee's comments.⁸⁷

Joohee: Because the Holy Spirit is the Person who respects us, unless we affirm and invite the Spirit into our heart, the Spirit cannot just barge into our lives...

Na: If we refuse to let God into our heart, then God cannot come in? *If so, there are certain things that God cannot do?*

Joohee: God can do everything. He is almighty.

Na: I thought you meant God cannot do everything. But not because God is incapable.

Joohee: That's right, not because God is incapable.

Na: But because God respects us. *Then, what about the idea that God punishes us when we do not obey God's will?*

Building on Joohee's initial response, the probing questions (in italics) might look like an act of stretching with an analytical tone. In rereading this portion of the script, I realized that I used the stretching method to build up my own argument. It could be considered as manipulation especially in light of the power imbalance where the participants were not theologically trained.

⁸⁶ Belenky et al., 217.

⁸⁷ According to Richard Osmer, "probing questions invite the student to go deeper than his or her initial response." Richard Robert Osmer, *Teaching for Faith: A Guide for Teachers of Adult Classes* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 80-81.

Even with the impression of manipulation, however, I would probably do the same without much hesitation in a similar situation. It was a teachable moment.

Building on their own responses, it was a rare chance for the teacher to challenge the student's deep-seated belief about God who strikes. This struggle was similar to what is often experienced by the teachers of critical pedagogy. Freire argues,

on the one hand, I cannot manipulate. On the other hand, I cannot leave the students by themselves... There is a directiveness in education which never allows it to be neutral. We must say to the students how we think and why. My role is not to be silent. I have to convince students of my dreams but not conquer them for my own plans. Even if students have the right to bad dreams, I have the right to say their dreams are bad.⁸⁸

Freire's idea of directiveness in education is in conflict with the method of stretching.

Belenky et al.'s idea of "midwife" teachers who use the stretching as a primary method draws on Sara Ruddick's idea of "maternal thinking."⁸⁹ According to Ruddick, in "maternal thinking," mothers' primary concerns are preserving their children's lives, fostering their "growth," and raising their children "in a manner acceptable to" "the primary social groups with which a mother is identified."⁹⁰ The last concern of "social acceptability" is clearly in conflict with Freirian, critical pedagogy which stresses the importance of individual and social transformation.⁹¹ The stretching in Belenky et al's view can hardly do more than protecting and promoting the natural growth of the students from within. The stretching is not to intervene or to transform the given reality.

⁸⁸ Shor and Freire, 157.

⁸⁹ Belenky et al., 218.

⁹⁰ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward A Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 17.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Adopting the PAR methodology, specifically from the Freirian tradition with the emphasis on transformation, I believe, I should be free to intervene, or free to become a "prophetic" leader, who can name her passion and vision.⁹² This freedom resonates with RCT's idea of mutuality as "real engagement" and "authenticity."⁹³ To really engage or be authentic with the students, I should be honest about my vision. What is at stake, according to Hess, is that teachers' prophetic challenge must be done in a "connected" form of passionate assertion," by using "empathy."⁹⁴ In other words, it should be done in an holding environment where its three tasks of "confirmation, contradiction, and continuity" are at work.⁹⁵ Holding both challenge and connection is the key to successful teaching.

Teacher's Political Use of "We" vs. "Feminists" "They" Language

In the fourth workshop, I was challenged by Joohee. She framed her challenge in "you," "academic," "feminist" versus "we," "laypersons." But it was I, the teacher, who first used the same phrase in stressing, "we, the Korean women" versus "they, Western feminists." It is ironic that Joohee learned these phrases from me and later used them to confront me. The strategy to distinguish "we" from "they" the "Western feminists" served several purposes. First, it prevented me from imposing Western feminist theories upon the participants. Whenever I drew on Western feminists, I referred them in the third

⁹² Hess, 229.

⁹³ Jordan, "Relational Learning," 24.

⁹⁴ Hess, 229.

⁹⁵ Kegan, 258.

person plural form "they," identifying myself as "we," which referenced me with the group. These pronouns worked as an important safety device in preventing the women as the received knowers from blindly accepting the teacher's words. When I said it is not my idea but "their" idea, the students felt less pressured to accept it.

"We" versus "they" empowered the women participants to safely disagree or challenge the teacher's ideas because those are "their" [Western women's] ideas. This strategy enabled the teacher and participants to discuss the feminist ideas without the fear of offending others. The strategy functioned to provide a safe environment to accept or reject new ideas. Overall, along with the no right answer policy, the "we" versus "they" strategy worked well. In a member checking session, Kumhee evaluated my teaching,

it was a bit uncomfortable at times. But, since we were able to notice that you were not trying to force us into the opposite direction we did not want to go, but just trying to broaden our views, it [your teaching different ideas] was acceptable.

However, I should mention the "we" versus "they" strategy worked, only up to certain point. When the students' tolerances to Western feminist ideas reached a certain level, I became one of them (Western feminists).

The second function of the "we" versus "they" strategy was to test and evaluate the applicability of Western feminist theories in Korean churches. Whenever I introduced a new Western feminist idea, I always asked, "you have just heard what some Western feminist women think, but I want to know what *you* think about the issue as Korean women?" The "we" versus "they" talk helped to draw out what Korean women think differently, producing unique findings that are discussed in the following two chapters. The third function of the "we" versus "they" strategy was to protect myself from being accused of too liberal or heretic. While distinguishing myself from Western feminists by using the third person plural "they," I tried to be honest about how I like or

dislike "their" ideas. Sometimes, I left their ideas as "their" ideas without personally inserting my opinions whenever I felt the danger of stepping into a potential war zone for Korean Christians. I will continue this discussion in the following section about teacher's fear.

Missed Opportunities because of Teacher's Fear of Political Sensor

Sometimes during the workshop, critical questions were raised by the participants themselves. However, these questions did not always turn into learning opportunities. For instance, after the imaginative experiencing of the story of ten virgins, Joohee reported that she argued with Jesus to change the fates of her family members. Then, I reframed her response as follows.

What is the standard for Jesus' salvation? If I get saved and others are tormented, would I be happy in heaven? Is the heaven a gathering place only for those saved by Jesus? What is the heaven? What is the salvation?

After these big questions, however, I hastily moved to next activity. I did not pursue these questions further since they potentially involve the politically sensitive issue of religious pluralism. Honestly, I did not have enough conviction and courage to deal with the issue of religious pluralism with Korean lay women. I was not sure if it was a wise thing to do. The workshop could be censored by the senior pastor of SKPC and I could have been labeled as the "heretic." I felt my immediate task was to continue the workshops without disruptions. Out of the fear of political censorship, I missed a great teaching moment.

Another instance was when I introduced a feminist idea of Christian community as "God's body" rather than "Christ's body." At that time, I had to explain what God's body meant. The explanation about God's body was to include the idea that "Christian

community" and "Jesus as the Christ" are "exemplary, but not exhaustive or preemptive incarnations of the Divine Life."⁹⁶ But omitting this critical point, I simply explained.

Na: If we say the body of Christ, then we cannot embrace people who have not accepted Christ. If we use the body of God instead of the body of Christ, we can embrace more people. Being able to embrace many diverse people by saying the body of God is critical aspect of feminist theologies. Could we not see other types of people to be the body of God?

Okja: You are saying God sees all as the body of God.

Hanna: They are ultimately the same creatures of God as we are. They are not formed naturally but created by God.

Eunhae: We are not mere animals but spirited beings.

Insook: Animals are also God's creatures. We should feel pity on them.

Seeing Hanna and two others responding favorably toward the idea of God's body, I experienced a guilty feeling. I questioned myself, what if I reframe the question, "is it Jesus Christ the only way to salvation? Can we be saved otherwise, through any other ways than Jesus Christ?" I am convinced that their answer must have been a definite "no, Jesus Christ is the only way for salvation." In my explanation, I only talked about the positive effects of the body of God, for example, being able to embrace all people of different faith. But I did not fully explain what is really at stake when we emphasize the God's body instead of Christ's body. I did not mean to deceive. I just lacked the courage to push the issue further. Nevertheless, it felt like a deception. I should not have brought up this issue at all if I did not have the conviction. In my own embarrassment and shame, I prematurely ended the discussion leaving much to be affirmed and debated from their answers. Another missed teachable moment!

⁹⁶ Culp, "Nature of Christian Community," 168.

In the second member checking session, Kumhee talked about her guilty feeling in learning feminist ideas.

If a person raises an issue about faith, I automatically become defensive. When we try to expand our horizons for new and better ideas beyond the traditional understandings of faith, we feel guilty. Therefore, it is important to distinguish whether those new ideas are poisonous for our soul and thus sinful, or beneficial in better understanding of God.

While listening to Kumhee, I realized my own sense of guilt, worrying what if I contaminate the "pure" and "undiluted" faith of the innocent participants. This concern was not completely groundless. I am a trained theological thinker. I can choose or discard from the various feminist ideas. But I doubt that my student-participants had the same ability. Maybe, closing their ears to new ideas could be their best defense. My reservation to articulate the meaning of God's body was not just for my protection but for the protection of the participants. In teaching feminist theologies, my biggest dilemma was that I could not be *perfectly* sure which idea is "poisonous" or "beneficial," borrowing the words of Kumhee. This was one more reason why I could not pose myself as the teacher who knew everything. I was just one learner among many other participants in our journey toward knowing God more truthfully. Teaching needs humility.

CHAPTER VII

CONTENT ANALYSIS, PART I:
KOREAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S IMAGES OF SELF

In Chapters Seven and Eight, I engage the content analysis of the transcripts produced from the seven workshops and interviews of eleven women at SKPC. Chapter Seven explores Korean women's two dominant self-images of mother and wife. It also explores their self-image as the leaders of church and society. Chapter Eight examines Korean women's five most influential images of God and three most influential self-images as Christians, which are "child of God," "daughter of God," and sinner.

There are two arguments in this chapter on Korean women's self-images. First, the Korean women in the study show a narrow relational breadth, knowing themselves exclusively as the mother and wife. Second, the women show the reluctance to call themselves the leaders while actively participating in various leadership roles in the church. Despite their active ecclesial leadership, the Korean women lack the participation in mainstream society. The study suggests that Korean women's restricted images of church and faith are partially responsible for their narrow relational interests.

Who I Am? Korean-American Women's Dominant Self-Images

The women at SKPC I interviewed had difficulty in answering the question, "Who am I?" For example, Insook admitted that she had "not given much thought about who [she is]." Nevertheless, most women were able to describe themselves in terms of

two traditionally feminine roles of mother and wife. Heejung was the only one who did not describe herself in terms of these two roles but explained herself, "I am Heejung Lim. I love myself..."¹ However, Heejung's initial identification of herself in the individual tone soon shifted to a social tone when she explained how she had to "love herself in order to be loved by her husband." She also had to love herself despite her son's wish for her to continue taking care of his two children. Heejung asserted her right to take care of herself within the context of mother and wife. Accordingly, no Korean-American woman interviewee was able to explain herself in purely personal, individual terms, separating herself from the two predominant roles of mother and wife. "Mother" and "wife" are the two preeminent self-designators for Korean-American women.

I Am Woman, Helper of Husband and Children

The phrase, "I am woman," may seem like a feminist catchword to promote the authentic womanhood. Contrarily, the women at SKPC experienced their womanhood as limiting and oppressing.

Mija²: I always thought how wonderful it would be to be born as a man especially when I cannot travel by myself as a woman. I am not proud to be a woman. There is nothing good about being a woman. When I was young, I often wished I was born a man. I have no pride in anything I do.

Rose: Because I am a woman, I do not come forth. Sometimes, I get urge to take control over certain situations, but I hesitate because of what men may think. My views are not wrong, but I have to pull back only because I am a woman. This limitation often makes me mad.

Hanna: The first issue after the marriage was man's superiority and women's inferiority. It hurts me inside since my parents did not raise us with separate

¹ Heejung (pseudonym) is an interviewee in her early sixties.

² Mija (pseudonym) is an interviewee in her later fifties.

standards for boys and girls. My husband's family discriminate women over the men. I was badly hurt by such a treatment.

A sense of frustration, resignation, defeatism, and indignation are expressed.

Accordingly, the phrase, "I am woman" implies negativity.

During the workshops and interviews, the word "woman" was often used as an abbreviation for "the one who raises children and supports husband." Most women used "woman" to identify their secondary status as the one "who helps" or "supports."

Kumhee : I am a woman, which means I am more in a server or helper role. I have the urge to lead or take control but usually take a back seat. I am in a supportive role with my husband and trying to help others in a background. I am better at that kind of role.

Kumhee was both affirmative and confident in her role as a helper or supporter, believing that "women are born as helpers" and "instinctively more caring than men about raising children." Kumhee gave a divine sanction to women's "born" identity as caretakers when she argued,

it is the nature of women to be caring for others. God gave women bosoms to feed the babies. Men are given strength for harder work in the fields, and women stay home with lighter works. God made the physical features for those reasons.

While Kumhee deduced the divine sanction from the biological point of view, Soonhee rationalized woman's tendency as a helper from the Bible.

God made Adam and then made Eve as a supporter. Hence, women are helpers for men. In reality, women support the husbands and raise the children, conducting the typical role as a helper. The Bible also says Eve as a supporter to help Adam. When a pastor presides over a wedding, he says the bride is the supporter. Society never considers women as equal as men.

Soonhee sensed the injustice of society which "never" treats women "as equal as men."

However, she was unable to connect the injustice to the religious sanction of women as helpers in a cause and effect relationship, while uncritically accepting women's secondary

status. Such an acceptance partially explains the reason why Korean women are not motivated to change the situation. Insook, during the interview, said,

I have sacrificed my personal life for the betterment of my children's lives. Hence, I have not accomplished much for myself. Nevertheless, I would probably do the same with my life even if I get a second chance. My talent is to support others and to make the others do well, rather than pursuing my own successful social life.

Insook understood the cost of life in supporting others. Rather than being a victim, however, she was willing to accept her role as a helper if given another chance. The word "talent" from Insook resonates Kumhee's and Soonhee's belief in women's "born" or God-given identity as the helpers.³

I Am Mother

Mother and wife are the two dominant self-images of Korean women at SKPC. The importance of each role in the women's lives varies according to the life history or life circumstance of each individual. Yonghee believes that her husband should have higher priority over their children. This priority was learned through the death of her first husband, which made her "ashamed of herself." The majority of the interviewees chose the relationship with the husband, rather than the children, as the most significant human relationship. The priority given to the role of wife shifted based on their children's changing needs. For instance, Insook a mother of two sons said,

my second son is applying to college. The first son, in his last year of college, is interviewing for his first job. Before, the first priority was the husband, but now it is the children.

³ For example, there are the parable of talents in Matthew 25:14-30 or Luke 19:12-28.

The women saw their children's marriage as the decisive event where they can be free from the mothering responsibilities. For some, mothering never seems to end. Jangmi, 68 years old woman, continues to mother while living with her son. She said,

I cannot have a sense of completion as a mother since my two sons in their forties are not yet married.⁴

Mothering for Korean women becomes a timeless thing in that it extends to their grandchildren. Hanna, Soonhee, and Heejung are in their sixties. They are live-in babysitters for their grandchildren. Soonhee comes to America for six months a year, leaving her husband alone in Korea for the sole purpose of babysitting. Soonhee's motherhood reminds me of "the giving tree," who gave everything to the boy when she said,

what kept me up early in the morning to pray is for my pastor son. It is my mission to support my son with prayers as it motivates me to go on. I have nothing to offer to my son's family but raising the grandkids as best as I can, using good health that God gave me and my fervent prayers for my son's family.

There is remarkable resemblance between Soonhee's comment, "I have nothing to offer" ... but my "good health" and the giving tree's statement, "I have nothing left to give you" but "an old stump."⁵

Much of Soonhee's devotion as a mother is saturated with the religious meaning. Likewise, most of the women interviewees view the motherhood as work of raising God's children rather than their own. Insook says,

I am to raise my kids correctly, for they are the children of God. If they were my children, only then I will raise them any way I please. However, since they are also the children of God, I have to raise them in God's words and teachings.

⁴ Jangmi (pseudonym) is an interviewee in her late sixties.

⁵ Silverstein, 47-49.

Without such ideological support or conviction in faith, Korean women's limitless devotions to their children are not possible.

"I Can Die for My Child"

A sacrificial mother is the first and foremost qualifier of Korean womanhood, as in the following episode where the workshop participants discussed Abraham's sacrifice of his son (in Genesis 22:1-19).

Soonhee: If it was his mother, rather than Abraham, who took Isaac to mountain, the mother would have tried to sacrifice herself for Isaac.

Insook: Mothers probably insist that they die for their children instead.

Soonhee: A woman, even with great faith, can never do the same what Abraham did with Isaac because of her motherly love. If a woman actually did what Abraham did, she is heartless and vicious.

Hanna: The difference between men and women is that mothers suffer just as much when a child is hurt or ill. But men do not seem to hurt as much. Women are stronger than men. When difficulties come, women stand by their kids and take care of the problems. But men usually take short cuts.

The sacrificial love for their children constitutes Korean womanhood. Soonhee shows a double standard by judging a woman's sacrifice of her own child as a "heartless and vicious" act while praising the same deed of Abraham as "an act of great faith." It discloses her strong conviction that Korean womanhood is all about mothers' practicing sacrificial love for their children. Siding with Soonhee, Hanna views strong motherly love as the critical factor in distinguishing women from men. On the other hand, Kumhee from the member checking session contended, "fathers just do not express their true feelings. They get hurt inside more than women." Perhaps, the sacrificial love for the children is not gender-specific or gender-related. Nevertheless, for the majority of women, their womanhood depends on the ability to love their children unconditionally.

My Child: My Source of Confidence, Confirmation, and Shame

Jangmi and Heejung share many similarities in their lives. They are in their sixties and are the breadwinners after their husbands retired. Jangmi rents out the rooms of her house and Heejung does clothing alteration from her son's home. Despite the similarities, two women have different perceptions of their lives in America. Jangmi has bitterness and a sense of failure toward her life, while Heejung is replete with a sense of gratitude and self-confidence.

Jangmi: I didn't expect my son who is over 40 could still be single. I realized that the children are the pride of parents. I ask God whether I still have too much pride. I thought I humbled myself enough. I feel guilty, wondering if my children are suffering because of my pride. I may not have done my responsibility as a mother. The responsibility to raise children and help them to have the families of their own.

Heejung: I enjoy showing off the dresses I made. I am very happy with the skills that I have. When my son received a doctoral degree on the graduation day, he said to the guests, "I became a good surgeon because of my mom's crafty hands and my dad's mechanical knowhow." I thank God for that.

On the surface, Jangmi seems to have a better life than Heejung. Jangmi has her own house, while Heejung lives in her son's house as a live-in baby sitter. Jangmi graduated from the most prestigious university in Korea, while Heejung has only a high school degree. In fact, Jangmi was proud of her distinguished educational background during the interview. However, her pride crumbled in the face of her sons' lack of successful careers and marriages. Jangmi's pain and suffering ring true since she and her husband moved to America for their sons' education without the proper visa, leaving behind the luxurious life in Korea. Her struggle to find a religious meaning to her sons' failure, which she took as her own failure, sounds authentic. Jangmi's words, "the children are the pride of parents," explain Heejung's positive and affirming attitude toward herself, life, and God. Successful children are the pride of Korean mothers.

Insook is another case where children became the most important source of mother's self-worth. When asked, "who are the people who need you the most?" she answered,

it is my neighbor, the family of James, who has 11th and 8th grade kids. They came to my husband and me for an educational counseling. They said it was lucky to meet us. They did not mingle with others and considered their way of raising children to be the best. However, after consulting and seeing how we raise our kids, their attitude toward the children's education and faith has changed completely for the better. To these folks, I am needed.

Insook's first son will graduate from Harvard University, and her second son is expected to enter Harvard or another prestigious university. Her successful motherhood in raising a Harvard graduate is well recognized by other Korean mothers in the community, and she and her husband became mentors to many college bound parents. Being able to help other mothers through her successful mothering experience affects Insook's sense of self-worth positively, who admittedly has "not accomplished much for [herself]" while sacrificing herself for the children. Her children are the only source for her self-worth and confidence. Living in a limited environment in America due to her language barrier, she does not have much to look forward in her life other than her children.

Insook shows that the children can be a source of Korean mother's self-worth due to idiosyncratic lifestyle of many Korean immigrant families. She said,

I wonder what my children think of us? I believe that we are viewed positively as they receive our faith and beliefs in good ways... Our children discuss the important things with us. This shows that they respect our opinions. No matter how much they learn in school, we can provide better insights for certain things. There are also times when I ask my children to help me find out about things, and they search the internet and share the results with me. These interactions show I am impacting my children.

Insook is aware that her children "have more [American] education" and "knowledge [toward American ways]" than both parents. Accordingly, the experience of being respected by well educated children must strengthen her sense of self-worth.

The family dynamic for the Korean immigrants in America differs from the family dynamic in Korea. As with Insook, there are often the power reversal between the parents and children based on the ability to speak English. The following story of my husband who immigrated to America at the age of thirteen shows that dynamic.

When my father-in-law got into a fender bender, my husband contacted the insurance agent instead of his father who does not speak much English. My husband pretended to be the father by answering all of father's personal information such as telephone number, date of birth, and social security number without any hesitation from the memory. It was a surprise. When I asked why he was pretending to be his father, he said, at first he was merely interpreting for his father, but after awhile it was more convenient to act as his father and make a decision for him rather than interpreting. Apparently from his early teen years, he became an unwilling decision maker for the family and was always invited to sit at the table among the adult relatives during many family gatherings.

Playing a role of the decision maker for the family puts a great burden for a teenage boy who still needs the guidance and protection from the parents. But for my husband, it was not a matter of choice. It was a normal life of Korean immigrant family where the creative adjustments were necessary to survive in America.

My husband's story shows only one facet of complex child-parent dynamics in Korean immigrant families. Kisook conveys the reality of unconditional love from Korean mothers toward their children.⁶

When I asked my son about his friend whether he was white or colored, my son replied, "why are you asking about that?" My question is the Korean way and does not mean for prejudice, but the kids who were educated in America think differently from the parents. We are trying to help them by knowing about them.

⁶ Kisook (pseudonym) is an interviewee in her early fifties.

This is a Korean way in which parents have keen interest in everything the children do. But they think that this is too intrusive.

Korean mothers suffer varying degrees of disconnection and alienation from their American-cultured children despite the life-long devotion and sacrifice for their children. This is a compelling reason for Korean mothers' desire to believe that they are raising God's children rather than their own. It is an extremely difficult task for Korean-born mothers to successfully raise American-cultured children without God's help.

Keep at Least the Stump

Korean mothers at SKPC have maintained intense devotion and sacrificial love for their children despite the ever changing livelihood and shifting parent-child power dynamics. In the preceding chapter, the Korean women's sacrifices or giving themselves away for the children failed to materialize into an issue. However, the discussion eventually reached a consensus that the Korean mothers need to be more realistic and practical about unconditional sacrifices to their children.

Na: We get disappointed by the children not returning favors after giving them our whole lives. We should give without anything in return, but since we are not god, that is impossible.

Okja: That's true. We do want something in return.

Hanna: My husband advised me not to expect anything in return from the children when I babysit the grandchildren.

Okja: When our children become independent, we should find our lives and make ourselves available to other relationships so that we don't get disappointed from our children.

Kumhee: Indeed, we should not rely on our children to provide the support but place others around us early.

Okja: Give only minimum support. Keep at least the stump for ourselves!

It was a small victory for the women to realize the need to care for themselves. But even that small victory was dubious since "keeping at least the stump" implies that they have already given almost everything. Besides, the victory was only a short-lived mirage when the discussion turned into mothers' lamenting over how they were unable to provide more for their children. The Korean mothers give endlessly and helplessly!

Not Giving Up, But Just Postponing to Care for Myself

The majority of women said that they are not giving up taking care of themselves but just waiting for the completion of motherhood. Minjoo, a mother of three young children in her late twenties, said,

the situation does not allow me to have time for myself now. I will have those times when my kids are all grown. Therefore, I am focusing on the current situation. My time will come later.

Minjoo's hope for having her own time does not seem promising when the other women in their sixties said that they are still waiting,

Soonhee: My grandkids need me. It is the time for me to raise them. The time will come to look after myself when the grandkids grow up.

Hanna: My daughter-in-law mentioned that she wants to go to Africa for a mission. I responded, I too want to go to Africa for a mission. We are praying for the mission trip after my granddaughter is all grown.

Women in their sixties dream the same dream that Minjoo in her twenties dreams. Such extended motherhood is not hard to find in Korean immigrant families. The survival of those families often depends on the grandmothers' childcare which benefits greatly toward the family finance.

The fulfillment of Soonhee's and Hanna's dreams seems indefinite, not really knowing when their mothering will end. But Heejung, 62 years old grandmother of three grandchildren, is determined to have a definite end to her extended mothering.

I went into my first son's house with three-year plan.... Even with my age, I have a dream. I continue to pursue my work even during the babysitting my grandkids. I have been telling my son only one more year of babysitting. I told my son not to rely on me any longer because I was getting old. I also told him my life begins after 60, and for a healthy life I need to have a dream and have something planned for myself next year.

Soonhee's dream of a life after babysitting may not be an impossible dream. Elder Rose, who once "had hard time and cried a lot while raising kids," now lives that life she dreamt. Soonhee and the others did not seem bothered by the fact that there are certain things that only the young can do, and some of their lost opportunities can never be recovered later. In the member checking session with Kumhee and Rose, I shared my concern about the women's postponing self-care. Kumhee responded,

if my children become successful, and someone had to raise them, then I have done a valuable thing. Just as Jesus has done important things for us, we can also do it by fulfilling the needs of others. Jesus died for needy human. As such, if we sacrifice our lives for others, doesn't that relate to what Jesus did for us? Serving my children, husband, and others around me does not make my life pitiful but rather makes me happy. Isn't that the Christian value?

Kumhee points out the core of the issue more clearly. Korean mothers and grandmothers are not passively waiting for future self-actualization. Rather, they are actively participating in caring for others, which they consider to be a critical part of the Christian self-actualization. Without the ideological support such as "Christian value," Korean women's extended mothering, which is often unpaid, unrecognized, and unappreciated, may not be possible.

Rethinking Sacrifice from Poor Mothers' Eyes: If There is Only One Loaf of Bread?

Feminist theologians show skepticism toward the Christian teachings about the cross and sacrifice, which have harmful effects on the lives of women. Sondra Stalcup argues,

a woman can literally sacrifice herself, her very selfhood or humanness, in serving and attending to others. A predominant theology of self-sacrifice is hardly good news to women in that state... A call for sacrifice in the name of Christ serves quite well those in power in patriarchal structures of household, governments, and religious institutions.⁷

Kumhee confirms the feminist skepticism by connecting her sacrifice to Jesus' sacrifice, "if we sacrifice our lives for others, doesn't that relate to what Jesus did for us?" While recognizing this correlation between the sacrifices of women and Jesus, we should not hastily jump into a wholesale denial of Korean women's sacrifices for their children.

Korean mothers' sacrifices have a specific dimension of which well-to-do Western feminists may not know. The following member checking session with Kumhee shows such dimension.

Looking after ourselves seems opposite to sacrificing for others and may feel that we are sinning. Loving others seem sacrificial, but looking after myself seems a selfish act. They seem totally opposite. We typically give our children tasty foods first and eat what is leftover or less quality food for ourselves. If parents eat good food and give the other foods to our children, don't you think I am a terrible mother? Could both loving my children and loving ourselves occur at same time? If there is only one loaf of bread, I should not eat in order for others to eat. It is said, I need to be healthy first in order to help others. But if I eat first, what about for others?

Listening to Kumhee, I was struck by the harsh reality of life, especially the life of immigrant, Korean mothers. In the unfavorable life circumstances where a mother does

⁷ Sondra Stalcup, "What About Jesus?: Christology and the Challenges of Women," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 124.

not have enough resources for the survival of her children and herself, a good mother must give up her portion for the children. That has been the case for many Korean women. Carol Hess in Chapter Four argues that women should care for herself first in order to be able to care for others. But for a poor mother, caring for herself first before others may not be an option. More often than not, she has to choose *either* self *or* others. Korean mothers have been choosing others, their children, over her. The distinction between self and other may not apply to Korean mothers' relationship to their children since they consider their children to be part of their selves. As seen in Jangmi's suffering for her unsuccessful sons, the child's suffering becomes her mother's suffering.

My Mother: I Am My Mother's Daughter

Considering Korean mothers' sacrificial love for their children, it should not be a surprise to discover that many women named their own mothers as the role models for life and faith. The following interviewees described how their mothers became their role models. These mothers can be categorized into three types.

1) *Hyun Mo Yang Cho*

Insook: I was very close to my mother. She is my spiritual role model as she is a woman leader in the church. I think about her a lot in everything I do. She and I are very much alike. There is a person you are automatically attracted to. My mother is like that. Among my sibling, I am most alike my mother, for she is quiet and respected by my father and took good care of herself. She was never in a mess, even at home where she was always clean and wears full make-up. I always wanted to be like her.

"Hyun Mo Yang Cho" refers to "the ideal image of the Korean woman," which is supported by the "male-centered" Confucian ideology.⁸ *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* means "a submissive wife and a sacrificial mother" whose life is "restricted to the domestic world," fully committed to "child-bearing and child-rearing."⁹ Insook's mother was a *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* as she was mostly homebound and her primary concern was to satisfy the traditional sex-role expectations of what a woman should be at home, being "quite," "clean," "wearing makeup," for her husband's approval and satisfaction.

2) Sacrificial Mother

Kisook: When I was in the fourth grade of elementary school, my mother became a widow in her thirties. She worked in many jobs to provide for the family, including selling box-lunches to bank employees, and became a street merchant with my grandmother. I have seen many sacrifices of women.... My mother never asked anyone for support in raising us, sending us to school and taking care of the family. She tried best to live her life with the given situation and not rely on others. She was raised in a well-to-do family and never experienced any hardship. But after her marriage, my father side of the family did not let her attend her father's funeral. Instead, her father-in-law attended the funeral on her behalf. But she did not complain because she thought her married life was just a different way of living. That kind of positive attitude was passed down to me and my sister.

Sacrificial mother and *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* could be used interchangeably. I specifically name Kisook's mother the sacrificial mother in order to emphasize her lifelong dedication to her children without the husband. Kisook's mother was widowed early and remains

⁸ Minza Kim Boo, "The Social Reality of the Korean-American Women: Toward Crashing with the Confucian Ideology," in *Korean-American Women: Toward Self-Realization*, ed. Inn Sook Lee (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 74.

⁹ Ibid., 74-75.

unmarried throughout her entire life to fully support her children.¹⁰ She was the breadwinner and sole provider for the family.

All women interviewees are fervent supporters for the practice of women's sacrificial love for their children. Insook wants to live a life of sacrifice even if she gets "a second chance." Kisook wants to emulate her mother's life by "living a life of a peacemaker," which means, "the one who sacrifices herself for others," according to Kisook's definition. Strong faith is not necessarily a common factor to motivate these women to emulate their mothers' sacrificial life since Kisook remembers her mother as "a person of weak faith," who "used to doze off during the sermon."

3) Incredible Woman of Self-Determination

Heejung: My mother was an incredible woman. She passed away at the age of 100. I do not hesitate to name her my most respected person. She was a leader of charismatic Christian organization where she worked steadfastly. She taught us those faithful and kind characters in our lives. She came to America at the age of 60 and went back to Korea when she was 92 because she preferred to live independent of her children. She lived alone for 8 years in Korea until she passed away. I became determined to live like my mother. I want to help others and live steadfastly the righteous life. She died very peacefully just as she had wished. I want to be and live like her.

Heejung characterizes her mother as a person of unyielding faith. Heejung's mother stands out by her determination in faith and independence from her children. With a determination, Heejung's mother lived out what she believed in her life. Her mother went back to Korea for a life of her own, leaving behind the security of children's supports, which was necessary for her. From the interviewees, Heejung was the only woman who articulated her identity on her own term, "I am Heejung Lim," stated emphatically "I love

¹⁰ It was customary that women should leave their children, especially if it is a boy child, when a Korean woman remarries. Such tradition still in practice for Korean-American couples.

myself," and set the definite limit of "three years" on her babysitting duty. Her wish "to be and live like" her mother does not seem like empty words.

Belenky et al. stress the importance of "maternal or nurturing authorities" such as "female peers, mothers, sisters, grandmothers" in women's development since women can "talk things over" with those women of "sympathetic, nonjudgmental" attitudes and "similar experiences."¹¹ However, this conversational quality of mother-daughter relationships was not explicitly noticeable from the interviews. Korean mothers' influences on their daughters seem greater by living a specific life style, rather than being knowledgeable, reliable conversational partners with their daughters. Korean daughters learn to be *Hyun Mo Yang Cho*, sacrificial mother, or independent woman, through experiencing their mother's life itself and appreciating it with high regard. Korean mothers teach their daughters about the sacrificial life through their own lives and deeds rather than the words.

Mothering Spills Over into the Public

Ruddick views peace practice as something that can be naturally grown out of motherhood.

Maternal identification can be transformed into a commitment to protect the lives of "other" children, to resist on behalf of children assaults on body or spirit that violate the promise of birth, "That's being a mother."¹²

According to Ruddick, mothering "at its best" is

¹¹ Belenky et al., 60. Belenky et al. see these maternal authorities as helpful for women "in transition" from a "received" to "subjective" phase of knowing.

¹² Ruddick, 57.

a struggle toward nonviolence, a *struggle* not to hurt what is strange, not to let other children be abused out of fear or loyalty to one's own.¹³

Hanna confirms Ruddick's argument that the mothers' caring for their own children can extend to caring for the children of other women.

I once worked at a correctional facility for boys as a teacher. They would cry with remorse, but when they are out of the facility, they repeat the bad behaviors. They are not completely cured especially if their surroundings do not change. I took on that job because one of my brother-in-law experienced the facility. I was convinced that helping them will prevent my kids from getting into trouble. If they are not straighten out, then the society will not. ... We should be interested in raising our kids straight so that they would not be harmful to society. Further, I am making positive contribution by raising my grandkids with loving care of the family and good teaching. This will influence their friends and surroundings in positive ways. As I pray, by my meager contribution in raising good grandkids, I am doing a great thing for society. Taking care of grandkids ties up much of my personal time. But you never know what my little contribution of taking care of my son's family and seven weeks old grandkid will bring to society when the baby grows up to be a valuable citizen.

Hanna's interest in caring for delinquent boys grew out of her concern to "prevent [her own] kids from getting into trouble," which seems a defensive response. But her defensive measure soon turned into a more active, preventive one, which is raising her own grandchildren "straight" so that they will not "be harmful to society" and, further, benefit society. Hanna's case demonstrates how her mothering can spill over into the public through the work of caring for other children for my children's sake and vice versa. However, such spilling over of mothering work to public realm seems rare. This case was found only in Hanna and Insook. Korean women's motherhood focuses too narrowly on their own children and not the others'.

¹³ Ruddick, 57.

"Mother" as an Interpretive Lens in Reading the Bible

"Mother," a predominant self-image for Korean women, was used as the major interpretative key in reading the Bible. During the workshops, I encouraged the women to read the Bible from their own life experiences or from a perspective of woman. For example, the women were asked to imagine themselves as a prodigal daughter or one of the ten virgins. Through the workshop, they learned to use "mother" as an important interpretive key. I will first explore Korean women's relationships to the Bible and the dominant images of the Bible.

The Bible as Korean Women's Lifeline

Most women in the research are well-versed in the Bible. They perceive the words from the Bible as important as life-necessities. Three most frequent metaphors the women used to refer the words are "food," "weapon," and "power."

1) Words as Food

Hanna: The words are food. Just as if we don't eat, we get hungry, if we don't read the words daily, we get hungry. I get curious what message God will impart today. My daily reading consists of five chapters. I read the words first thing in the morning when I wake up.

2) Words as Power and Strength

Minjoo: My favorite Bible verse is the Corinthian II 6:10: "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things." This verse touches me and gives me strength to live on. When I think of this verse, I get teary eyes.

3) Words as Weapon

Kumhee: I used to memorize the Bible verse, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!," without much consideration. But it became very important verse as I experienced it in my life. We experience the sadness and depression in our lives, but the verse is the most powerful weapon against getting such lows in our lives. When I get anxious and nervous, I use the word of God to win over such spiritual welfare.

Among the three metaphors, food is used the most by the participants, especially with an expression "being fed by the words" or "being fed by the pastor's sermon." The words affect the women holistically, touching every dimension of their lives, which is expressed by Insook's metaphor of "multi-vitamin."

As the multi-vitamin supplement contains all kinds of nutrients, the Bible cures all areas of our spiritualities, mentalities, and physicality. The Bible is like the multi-vitamins for the spiritual, the physical, and the worries in our lives.

The words are not just spiritual necessity but practical, life necessities for these women to survive and live healthy, stable, and peaceful lives. During the fill-in-the blank activity, using a sentence, "the Bible is ____ to me," in the second workshop, several women referred to the Bible as "my friend." But even in this relational, personal metaphor "friend," such quality of life-necessity was evident when they further elaborated "friend" as "the one who is always there for me, comforting me" or as "the one who protects me and gives me a peace of mind."

The Bible as Absolute Authority and Biblical Literalism

Korean women's relationships to the Bible are complex. Most women in the study expressed a sense of closeness or intimacy to the Bible. However, the women's relationships to the Bible may be less close or intimate than they thought. A sign of these women's alienation from the Bible became visible from the first workshop when several women shared their initial encounters with the Bible as a "scary book."

Okja: Old Testament is scary. People suggested that I start from the New Testament or other non scary books from the Old Testament. When I reread the Old Testament afterward, all started to make sense, which blessed me.

Hanna: I too was afraid of God from the Old Testament. But after learning Jesus' love of the cross, the fear disappeared, and the love of God followed.

These women overcame the fear by reading the New Testament first and focusing on Jesus' love on the cross.

In the first workshop, there was another indication of women's alienation from the Bible, that is, a shortage of female role models for the women. When asked to talk about one favorite biblical figure, all but one participant, Hanna, mentioned male biblical figures as their role models. Even for Hanna, only reason she picked "Hanna" was that the name sounded similar. After finishing the second workshop where we tried to re-evaluate the various female, biblical figures from a feminist perspective, the women participants said, "Indeed, there are many women in the Bible!"

It was after imaginative engagement activities when the women became aware of their alienation from the Bible. Many expressed joy and excitement of their newly found connections to the Bible.

Hanna: Before the workshop, I have been reading the Bible just as a story. Now, I try to imagine myself as part of the story such as the ten brides' story to see whether the story applies to me.

Insook: Before, I read Abraham's story of sacrificing Isaac as if it applies to other people rather than how would I react if it was my son as sacrifice. Now, I do think about as if it was my son. I learned to take a fresh look at it from a woman's perspective.

Soonhee: This workshop enabled me to imagine myself being in the story. It gave me a new perspective on the Bible and made me closer to it.

The women's movement from reading the Bible "just as a story" of other people to "imagining myself in it" is no small change. Instead, it was a breakthrough which made the women feel "closer to" the Bible and start connecting to it. But even with such an important discovery of new connections to the Bible, the women's sense of alienation from the Bible would not completely disappear when they perceive words of the Bible as pure words of God. This point is illustrated by Okja who said "the Bible is like parents."

During the interview, Okja showed how the Bible can be perceived as the powerful authority figure.

I remember things of my youth as I have gotten older, how I lived my life, and bad things I did where those didn't seem wrong at the time. There is one incident I have not told anyone before, except to you. When I was attending YMCA over the summer, the teacher asked us to write on a notebook the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, every words and every letter exactly. But because I was not a devout Christian at the time and it was boring homework, I skipped here and there, thinking teacher would never find out. Recently, that incident has stayed in my heart. I have sinned against God, whether I sin knowingly or unknowingly. I am confessing to you now... this incident kept popping up in my mind recently. Whether by purpose or not, I have lied about the Word of God.

Okja may be an extreme case in showing her utmost respect toward the words of the Bible. The majority of Korean women at SKPC showed the respectful attitudes toward the Bible, viewing it as having absolute authority. The absolute authority given to words of the Bible naturally leads to a literalistic understanding of the Bible, accepting the words as unchallengeable and unquestionable. There were several examples of biblical literalism from the workshop sessions.

Hanna: Woman [referring to Eve] brought sin to the world, but it seems now men commit more sins... The society never considers women as equal as men.

Rose: I try not to sin because if I sin and do not confess, the Bible says up to three generations will be punished... Sometimes, I doubt if it really will be. However, we were told not to doubt but to follow God like a child. "Follow me as in the Bible without any doubt," says God.

Soonhee: No matter the size, the sin is sin. God said in the Bible that blinking our eyes and even the whispers are sin... I think about whether I am sinning while disciplining my grandchildren for their misbehaving.

These examples indicate an oppressive aspect of biblical literalism. As in above statements, the words are used in limiting and oppressing ways for women. Despite its negative impacts upon the women's lives, the women do not question these oppressive words or the traditional interpretations of them. Rather, they literally accept them as the

Truth. Rose complained that doubting the words itself is forbidden by the words.

However, there was a positive sign from the interview of Insook who said,

I am not sure what God would think of me, but I believe my faithful life fits me and it is the right way. People's lives are different, and God sees each and every faith in its own way. When I go to heaven, God will tell me I was faithful and took a right path in my life because, after all, I ended up in heaven. God told us to pray and read the Bible all the time. However, what good is it to just read the Bible without spiritual wisdom from God. I ask God to give me the wisdom to understand God's word and to determine whether my understanding of it is right, for my understanding might not be. If not, I would ask God to correct me. Further, I seem to follow God and read the Bible, but I might interpret the words incorrectly. My interpretation may be biased toward a specific denomination or be confused by the liberalistic views of others. However, I don't need to worry much since God will give me the wisdom to discern and guide me correctly when I ask. Isn't it?

Insook shows remarkable openness to the possibilities of different interpretations, even the possibility that her own interpretation could be wrong. Her exceptional tolerance for "ambiguity" in interpreting the words testifies that she is far beyond the literalism.¹⁴ I consider Insook to be in the high stage of faith development, what James Fowler calls "conjunctive faith," with the ability to be firmly grounded in what she believes as the truth while simultaneously acknowledging that her truth could be wrong since all truth is relative and partial.¹⁵

On the other hand, the fact that Insook does not have access to various interpretations of the Bible other than the "spiritual wisdom from God" concerns me. For example, feminist "critical" reading of the Bible is one possible way to read the Bible.¹⁶ According to Fiorenza, critical reading of the Bible directs us to

¹⁴ Belenky et al., 42.

¹⁵ Fowler, 198, 186-87.

¹⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Invitation to Dance in the Open House of Wisdom: Feminist Study of the Bible," in *Engaging Bible: Critical Readings from*

understand "text" as rhetorical communication that needs to be evaluated rather than accepted or obeyed."¹⁷

By "rhetorical communications," Fiorenza means that the biblical texts are "shaped by their socio-political-religious contextualizations."¹⁸ Fiorenza's view stresses the Bible as a human production. However, Insook seems to believe that the words of the Bible themselves are infallible and implicit with the Truth conferred by God. What can be wrong are only human interpretations. Insook's view can be problematic since her view of the words as being pregnant with not-yet-discovered Truth from God can limit her freedom to access the Bible using diverse, human methods such as Fiorenza's critical reading. I think there is nothing wrong with spiritual reading of the Bible. But the problem is who is going to decide what is the Truth. Accordingly, in addition to asking for God's guidance as Insook did, we should be open to adopting all humanly possible methods in interpreting the biblical texts faithfully.

Hanna has a similar problem to Insook's in believing that "God guides in reading of the Bible, helping [her] to understand it's meaning to every detail." At the end of the interview, I suggested that she study the Bible in a systematic way as in seminary classes. She flatly refused my suggestion and said, "studying the Bible academically will make my faith weaker or make it null." In Hanna's response, there is a danger of anti-intellectualism as well as subjectivism. Hanna's concern overlaps Soonhee's preoccupation with a "pure and undiluted Word of God."

Contemporary Women, ed. Choi Hee An and Katheryn Pfisterer Darr (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 83.

¹⁷ Fiorenza, 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 84. I believe that the Bible is far more than "rhetorical communications." I am introducing Fiorenza's view as one of possible ways to approach the biblical texts.

Reading the Bible from Mother's Experience

Reading the Bible from a mother's perspective is a big improvement from the literalism since it implies that the Bible can be read differently by different people. My suggestion to read the Bible from a women's perspective was well accepted by the group. In particular, reading the Bible from a mother's experience brought about powerful impacts on women's experiences of the Bible. It helped them connect to the biblical story more empathically and deeply. After imaginative dramatization of the story of the prodigal son, Kumhee responded,

I feel the intense pain as I imagine myself being a mother of prodigal son. I would be so sad when my son decides to leave, and I would wait for him afterwards. As I put myself into mother's shoes, I can understand the heart of God. We are like prodigal sons, wanting to leave God's protection. I can feel God's heartache. The elder son would never understand the heart of his parents unless he experiences the parenthood himself.

Kumhee analogously experienced her own son's moving out. This situation easily engrossed her into the story. Experiencing the prodigal son's story from a mother's perspective brought about increased empathy toward God. Kumhee was able to feel God's "heartache."

Reading the Bible from a mother's perspective can also make women keenly insightful as seen in Insook's comment,

I feel for Rebecca. I feel her pain as she tried to trick her son Esau into losing his blessings. She loved Jacob. But she also loved Esau, for he was also her son.

Her interpretation differs from a typical pastor's interpretation that stresses Rebecca's favoritism toward Jacob and her hatred against Esau. Insook is in a similar situation to Rebecca. Both Insook and Rebecca are the mothers of two sons. This gives Insook a fresh look at Rebecca's love for Esau, which could have been overlooked.

On the other hand, there is no guarantee that the mothers' experiential perspective is always insightful, creative, and un-conventional as it was the case for Insook. Rather, it has a limit, easily giving in to traditional and male-biased interpretations, which was evident in the women's discussion of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.

Soonhee: Because Abraham is a great man, a man of faith, and a man of God, he obeyed God's command and prepared to sacrifice Isaac. No woman with a mother's instinct will ever be faithful enough to sacrifice the son.

Hanna: It seems God gave such a huge test to the one who is able to handle it. God would not test such a thing to anyone. The story itself is scary, but it is included in the Bible to bless us and teach the greatness of faith. I could never do it, but God used Abraham to show the great faith which can be an example.

Soonhee: God chose Abraham, knowing that he can pass the test. As such, I am to learn such faith from the father of faith. But when I project my faith to his, I wonder, whether I am able to do that even in a million years?

No woman dared to question the inhumanness of a father sacrificing his own son while praising Abraham as a man of great faith and belittling themselves as a woman of meager faith, who could not make such a "faithful" act of "sacrifice even in a million years."

Reading from a mother's view needs to be questioned and challenged.

Knowing God through Mother's Eyes

The women used their experience of motherhood for their theological reflection without being taught. The followings are only few examples of such instances I observed during the workshop.

Eunhae: God loves us very much as we love our newborn babies when they were born. As such, God loves us all who are born into this world.

Hanna: I have realized from raising my grandkids that no one should be hated because it takes a lot of care in bottling three times a day and changing many diapers in order to fashion a well developed human being, a precious life.

Insook: When we sin, our punishment will be harsh, but it is for maturing of our faith. If we want to ruin our children's lives, all we have to do is not to punish

them but let them be as they are... Because we love, we punish them with the rod. Otherwise, they will become astray and destroyed. No parents would want their children to be ruined.

Joohee: When parents see their kids going astray, we do not want them to suffer but have no other choices except taking away the things from the kids that are meaningful for them, for example, cutting off allowances... From their perspective, those are punishments. But from the perspective of parents, those are not the punishments.

These women engaged in theological reflection by relying on their own mothering experiences. Eunhae and Hanna argue how every human life is precious and valued by God, utilizing their experiences of giving birth and taking care of babies. The last two statements are from our discussion on "God who punishes." Based on their mothering experiences, Insook and Joohee made persuasive arguments as to why God punishes us when we go astray. These women are theological thinkers in their own right.

This finding coincides with Sara Ruddick's argument that "maternal work itself demands that mothers think"¹⁹ and that mothers are "reasoners" as a result of mothering work.²⁰ According to Ruddick, mothers develop a certain type of thinking, which is characterized by three principles of "protection, nurturance, and training."²¹ Insook's and Joohee's argument that children should be protected from going "astray" or being "ruined" parallels Ruddick's first and second principles of protection and nurturance.

On the other hand, Insook's and Joohee's maternal way of thinking does not exactly fit the Ruddick's ideas of protection and nurturance. Ruddick emphasizes that the mother should know "whether intervention is called for" and, if so, when "to act, to

¹⁹ Ruddick, 24.

²⁰ Ibid., xi. According to Ruddick, mothering as "work" or "practice" does not mean "an identity or a fixed biological or legal relationship."

²¹ Ibid.

control,"²² while simultaneously allowing "a child to grow naturally."²³ Ruddick's point is to offer a good enough mothering. That is, "mothers do not relinquish control" of their children, but when they control, they ought to control patiently, not exercising "dominion."²⁴ Ruddick warns mothers of their "scrutinizing gaze of protection, attentive eye of nurturance" not turning into an "intrusive" one. Unlike Ruddick's advice, however, Korean mothers like Insook and Joohee, in their overzealous love toward the children, do not hesitate to throw their intrusive eyes upon the children and resort to violent intervention, punishing them "with a rod." Korean motherhood differs much from the Ruddick's ideal of Western motherhood.

Experience strengthens conviction, which could be a good or bad thing. It was difficult to challenge the women's dominant image of God who punishes, which was supported by their own experiences of mothering. When a disagreement arose, the women did not step back. For example, Hanna rationalized God's punishment for those who serve "other gods" by the following reasoning,

God has to use the rod. I would be upset if my kid goes to another person's home, calls other mother a mother, says that he likes the other house better than ours. I will not let my kid do that. Likewise, God also hates that.

Hanna would not have expressed with such confidence had it not been for her experience of mothering. Experience empowers the women's' voices.

²² Ruddick, 85.

²³ Ibid., 87. Ruddick calls this principle "preservative love."

²⁴ Ibid. 73.

Therefore, I agree with Ruddick that "maternal thinking" is "not free from flaws."²⁵ Possible flaws of maternal thinking are detectable in Hanna's and the other women's quotes. For example, in the first two statements, Eunhae and Hanna talked about the undeniable value and preciousness of each human individual as the object of God's motherly love. In the last two statements, Insook and Joohee stress the human beings as the objects of God's punishment. These two sets of statements are in potential conflict. Insook, Joohee, and Hanna explain God's punishment as various expressions of God's parental love toward God's children, including those who deny that they are God's children. This reasoning may make sense in Korean culture-specific context where parental beating out of love is relatively tolerable. But it fails to explain what Wendy Farley calls "radical suffering."²⁶ Can senseless beating of mother's love kill her child? And even worse, what if the child did not do anything bad to deserve that fatal punishment? Maternal thinking has serious limitations.

Three Authorities: Word of Bible, Words of Pastor, Mothering Experience

In the preceding section, I examined the Korean women's dependence on the words of the Bible as a lifeline and how they perceive the Bible or the words as the powerful authority, which becomes a leading cause of the biblical literalism. In Chapter Six under the title "Student's Use of Experiential Knowledge," I introduced a case debate activity, where I intentionally pit the authority of the Bible to prohibit divorce against the

²⁵ Ruddick, 25.

²⁶ Farley, 21. According to Farley, "radical suffering" refers to the suffering which "is destructive of the human spirit" and "cannot be understood as something deserved."

mothers' protective love for her abused adult-daughter. For this fictional case, I added one more authority figure, a senior pastor, who uses the words of the Bible to back up his anti-divorce advice. Majority of the women showed motherly, protective love over the authorities of the pastor's words and the Word of God.

Soonhee: If there are physical abuses, then I will advise her to divorce him. I will choose my daughter's life over the pastor's advice.

Eunhae: Not when there is a beating. If she was my daughter, then I will tell her to divorce him.

In Chapter Six, I have done the initial analysis of debate and argued that the use of women's experience of mothering as combined force with the case study method made women engage non-conventional, practical reasoning and overcome their susceptibility to the pastor's words and the Words of God. Now, I will re-examine this result, focusing on the power dynamics among motherly love, words of pastor, and Word of God.

Pastor as Authority Figure

Most of the women in the study perceived the pastor as an important authority figure. Pastors were most frequently referred to as those "who feed [the congregation] with the words of God." The pastors' words or sermons were often referenced during the interviews. Pastors' sermons are used as an interpretative tool. When Rose reads the Bible, she pauses at the text from the sermons of her pastor, and tries to remember what the pastor said about the text. For Korean women, the authority of the pastors is derived from their specific function to deliver the words of God. In addition to this function, there is one more Korean, culture-specific factor in giving utmost respect to pastors.

Soonhee: Our senior pastor is the spiritual father. Hence, I rely on him for many things in life. I may argue and voice my opinion freely with my real father. But I

would not do the same with our pastor, for I have complete respect for his authority.

Joohee: If we mention church as the house of God, the pastor comes to our mind first because he is the head of congregation. We consider the pastor to be a servant of God and servant of church. But in worldly term, if we talk about church as the house of God, then the pastor is the head of church. Therefore, we should uphold him.

Soonhee and Joohee referred the pastor as the "spiritual father" or as the "head" of the church which they viewed as the "house of God." The women's use of such family imagery coincides with the women's self-designation as a "child" or "daughter" of God and their dominant image of "God the Father." This predominance of family imagery can be traced back to the Confucian culture of Korea. According to Minza Kim Bo,

the Confucian political culture strengthens the Korean family system by legitimatizing male authority and institutionalizing a patriarchal family structure.²⁷

The Confucian, patriarchal family structure where male headship is emphasized, could partially explain why the Korean women give absolute authority to the senior pastor, the head of God's household.

The pastor as a "spiritual father" represents the Korean women's general view of the pastor's authority. However, the pastoral authority is more complex issue in Korean-American churches than in Korean churches. The following quotes from the divorce debate illustrate that complexity.

Insook: We should analyze closely what is the cause of the husband's violent behavior and whether it can be fixed. We should summon all of our faith, conscience, morality, education, and prayer to try to fix it, but if that does not work, then she should get a divorce.

Minjoo: When the pastor emphatically told not to get the divorce, then he must know something and have compelling reasons to state that. So, I would obediently listen to the pastor's advice and wait for the result.

²⁷ Boo, 73.

Joohee: You don't know how it feels because Hope (Minjoo's daughter) is still young. (all laugh)

Soonhee: Perhaps, the pastor may have already heard the answer from God.

Okja: You are telling your daughter to take on the burdensome cross, which she may not be able to carry.

Hanna: However, I think no pastor would advise his congregations to get divorced.

Minjoo's decision to "obediently listen to pastor" is in line with Soonhee's belief in the pastor who "heard the answer from God." In contrast, Insook did not make any reference to the pastor. Instead, she considered "faith, conscience, education, and prayer" as her references. The following interview with Insook discloses more about her view on the pastoral authority.

My faith grew with the messages from the senior pastor where he typically preached about the love and fellowship among the congregation. Those messages slowly permeate my life where I consider the importance of a love relationship between the persons, rather than faith and spirituality. Our pastor's mind set is toward the personal relationship. At first, I was a bit negative towards his approach. I thought when a person accepts the gospel and the faith in Jesus, her personal relationships will automatically be taken care of. Although the pastor probably knows more than I do, I thought he should have taken different steps. I thought, if one becomes faithful, one will automatically want to serve in the church. But I was not sure why he stressed people to serve and do the chores first.

Insook recognized her pastor's influence in nurturing her faith. But she was critical about the pastor's message which stresses the "relationship" over "faith and spirituality." Her ability to have a "negative" opinion on the senior pastor's sermon is not common among Korean laywomen, who have been trained to receive pastor's message with an enthusiastic "Amen." Insook is a wife of an associate pastor. Being a pastor's wife, to some degree, contributes to her disillusionment regarding the pastor's absolute authority. But such disillusionment seems not just an idiosyncratic phenomenon only for Insook.

I found certain signs of failing pastoral authority from other women as well. During the interview, Kisook confided in me as to how she was hurt by a pastor who preached "words which are not virtuous," showing interest only in the "worldly things [referring to money]." Kisook eventually left the church because she "cannot stop laughing at the pastor's message" of hypocrisy. Kisook's story may be considered a separate case. But Kisook leaving her church offers a clue for the pastors' diminishing authority in Korean immigrant churches in America. The Korean-speaking pastors have to compete for small number of Korean speaking church-goers, which becomes a leading cause for power-reversal between the pastors and the congregations. Korean congregations hold more practical power than the pastors because they can shop around and choose another church if they do not like the current church, as Kisook did. Accordingly, pastors at Korean-American churches cannot assume their ascribed authorities. Instead, their authorities should be earned through hard works.

In the divorce scenario, the motherly love was pitted against the pastor's words which were supported by the words of God. Considering Korean women's literal tendency and, thereby, susceptibility to the "Words of God," the initial consensus of the women to support the divorce was not a small success. It was especially the case for Okja who was scared of the pastor's words and God behind those words.

The word from the pastor that directly says "don't" seems the real word for my spirit. That is why the words directed toward me from our pastor scared me. It convinces me not to do the "don't," which seems to be the truth. I should not do the "don't" that God is telling me.

Okja was able to overcome two "don'ts," of the pastor's words and God's words.

Mother's love is strong enough to help her overcome the fear of two powerful authorities.

I Am A Wife

Wife's "Most Desperate Needs": Husband

The Korean women in the study view the husband-wife relationship as indispensable. Yonghee perceived it as the absolute necessity as she recollected,

I suffered a lot after my husband's death... I was embarrassed without a husband, embarrassed about being a widow, and not able to function normally.

Living without a husband is a shameful experience for Korean women, which I personally know well by living as a single woman for almost two decades. A Korean woman without a husband, regardless of her accomplishment, is considered incomplete, inferior in social rank, and is discriminated against. Because of the socio-cultural implication of living without a husband, Soonhee's conviction, "the most desperate needs are between married couples," is understandable.

Yonghee's "desperate need" for a husband could mean many things beyond avoiding the shame of no husband. The desperate need for a husband or wife can be seen from the perspective of Korean immigrant family as a survival unit. Kwang Chung Kim and Won Moo Hurh in their research on "the work-family role experiences of Korean immigrants" explain the Korean wives' involvement in the family business.

Most of the wives of the Korean entrepreneurs have been involved in the various stages of business activities in spite of the traditional Korean marital roles which confine the wives to the home maker's role.²⁸

According to Kim and Hurh, Korean wives' involvement as the "unpaid family workers" in "immigrant business," which is often under "deprived" conditions, is

²⁸ Kwang Chung Kim and Won Moo Hurh, "The Wives of Korean Small Businessmen in the U.S.: Business Involvement and Family Roles," in *Korean-American Women: Toward Self-Realization*, ed. Inn Sook Lee (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 25.

"indispensible."²⁹ Like the Korean wives in the study by Kim and Hurh, Younghee, now being remarried, runs a pet-store with her husband. Two other women in my study run small businesses, dry cleaning pickup store and full dry cleaner with their husbands. For these couples, being husband and wife directly relates to the survival of their family.

My study is unique in that five of sixteen participants are pastor's wives. Kumhee is one of them. For a pastor's wife, a husband is indispensable for another reason.

I am most close to my husband. A wife of minister is not an easy person for congregational members to befriend. They do not consider me same as the other people. They were all shocked to hear that I had a really bad week. They thought a wife of minister always wins over the trials. I too want to be consoled, for I am not a superwoman. I want to share these things with someone, but there is no one. But my husband understands such pains and comforts me. If I discuss these with others, they would only tell me to pray more, which hurts me more and makes me more defensive.

Kumhee's pressure to be "a super woman" as pastor's wife made her life lonely and painful. Her husband is the only one she feels safe to share her ups and downs and can be real to herself. A company of husband is indispensable for emotional health for Kumhee and the other pastor's wives. Kumhee's loneliness of not having someone to share her heart reminds me of Rose who said during our co-analysis session,

nowadays, there really isn't much *jung* in our lives. I have tried to open up myself to some people in America before, but I ended up regretting it most of times. I have missed *jung* so much. But from the workshop, I found a place to get love and *jung*.

First generation Korean immigrants are likely to live isolated lives while focusing on the family survival. Rose's loneliness of not being able to "open up herself to someone" sounds no less painful than Kumhee's. Recalling the first workshop session where all the

²⁹ Kim and Hurh, 26-27. According to Kim and Hurh, "self-employed [Korean-American] small business owners in general are isolated from the mainstream in the U.S. economy and deprived of critical business-related information." Ibid., 27.

women cried with no apparent reason but the lack of *jung* (love), I empathize with Korean-American women's desperate needs for husbands with whom they can safely share their inner most thoughts and feelings.

In addition, for the women in the study, maintaining a good husband and wife relationship is considered a critical part of the Christian faith.

Kisook: I want my husband to be my partner in our spiritual journey with same enthusiasm and commitment.

Mija: After the marriage in America, I became convinced that my ministry is my family and my husband.

Yonghee: God expects us to do the best for our spouses in terms of loving each other. In God's eyes, most closest persons ought to be between the married couples. For me, it is my husband. It should be the relationship of loving and sacrifices. Unless we do this, we cannot have any other relationships.

Hanna: If I am not peaceful with my husband, then I cannot be peaceful with anyone else. The peace of my family comes first.

Yonghee and Hanna see the husband and wife relationship to be the most fundamental human relationship without which other genuine human relationships are not possible.

For Mija, Yonghee, and Hanna, the family is not just a survival unit but the laboratory of faithful living that extends to other social relationships.

Han of Korean Wives

It may seem contradictory that Korean wives suffer mostly from what they cherish the most, their relationships with the husbands and the extended families. Unfortunately, it is the case for many research participants. The following two stories are about the Korean women's *han* which was caused by living as *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* and as a submissive wife.

Wife's Unfulfilled Dream While Fulfilling *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* Ideal.

Jangmi used the same phrase, "I had many dreams," five times during the interview, each time trying to explain how big her dream was and how she came to lose it. The following quote is one of them.

I had many dreams. I loved teaching and I would probably become a famous educator if I did not get married. I left my teaching post at school when my parents insisted that I get married, raise kids, and become a good wife. I could not fulfill my dream after I got married. I used to serve as a president of prestige college alumni, but not after the marriage. My mother taught us to be neat, even at home, because she said the woman is the flower of family. I had always prepared for my husband's clothing and suit cases for his business trips. My children are the precious gifts from God. I cannot let my children babysit by other people. However, such an intense caring of children and husband reached its limit. One time when I let other to babysit my children for an alumni meeting, the children got sick. For these reasons, I could not do the things I wanted to do.

Jangmi's description of herself as the one who is committed to "an intense caring of children and husband" parallels the Confucian ideal of *Hyun Mo Yang Cho*, "a submissive wife and sacrificial mother."³⁰ She gave up her teaching job, career as an artist, and a dream of becoming "a famous educator," while trying to obediently emulate the *Hyun Mo Yang Cho* according to her mother's teaching. Jangmi did not say that she regrets her life but repeatedly mentioned the "many dreams." Those repetitions communicate Jangmi's *han* of unfulfilled dreams.

My Dream Got Lost in My Husband

Hanna had a dream of serving God as a minister. But her dream got lost by the Confucian sex-role stereotyping about what women should not do.

I promised God, after realizing that Jesus had cleansed my sins with the blood of cross, "I will serve the Lord as long as I live." I told my senior pastor at the time

³⁰ Boo, 74.

that I needed to go to a seminary. He persuaded that I should not necessarily go to seminary and that there are many other ways to serve God. I could serve God by continuing to be a good teacher. Then, the pastor prayed for me to become a minister's wife. I did not know how to become a good minister's wife, but my pastor continued to pray.

Hanna's senior pastor had a limited view of what women ought to do, a teacher or a pastor's wife with emphasis on nurturing. Accepting the pastor's advice, she married a minister. During her marriage, she kept looking for an alternative way to serve God and found one. But she was forced to give up that alternative as well by her husband.

My minister husband told me to focus on my main task, that is, the family. When I was in Korea, I volunteered to teach in a boys' correction institution. But my husband told me to work after fully raising our children first. He stressed "our family, our family." I quitted teaching after a year and half, although I really wanted to continue. I had to concede for the peace of the family, while feeling a boiling of anger from inside. Otherwise, we would continue to fight over it.

Worse, Hanna was not even allowed to work as a minister's wife at their own church.

My husband did not let me be visible in the church. That was why some people in the church did not know that I was the pastor's wife. My husband did not let me step in front of the people in the church. He just did not like me to do that. I could help in the church kitchen but not in front of the congregation such as a representative prayer. That's why I asked to be taken off from the next representative prayer.

At the age of 62, Hanna is not free to do a representative prayer. She still have a "boiling of anger from inside," which she felt when she was young. One way to define *han*, which is a multifaceted concept, is to relate *han* to "suppression of emotion."³¹

According to Jae Hoon Lee, feelings that are "suppressed for a long period" "turn inside and become the feelings of *han*."³² Hanna lives the two lives of *han*, a *han* of obstructed dream because of gender role stereotyping and *han* of suppressing the true feelings.

³¹ Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 3.

³² Ibid.

Being Stuck: Playing Roles of Worker, Wife, Mother, Daughter-in-Law and Following the Cross

The section titled "Being stuck" introduces the stories of Korean women who are being stuck while performing four roles of worker, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, and emulating the way of the Cross. Their stories deliver a sense of impasse or stuckness in which the women struggle to fulfill expected roles from others, their own desires, and the aspirations to follow the way of the Cross. These women often experience themselves as the divided self. "Impasse," "stuckness,"³³ and "the divided self"³⁴ are different expressions of "alienation," one of three generative themes in explaining the Western women's life and faith according to Nicola Slee.³⁵ Alienation, Slee argues, can eventually lead to a "profound loss of self, of authentic connection with others and of faith."³⁶ I explore the Korean women's experience of alienation and how they handled it.

Getting Stuck: Wife Working inside Home

During the interview, Insook said that she is willing to live a life of sacrifice again if she "gets a second chance." But Insook contradicts her confidence in being a sacrificial mother when she said the following during the workshop.

I usually stay home while other women are out there working and making money. When I complained to my husband that I have wasted all day staying home and doing nothing productive, he replied, "you have done kitchen chores, cleaned house, and watched after the kids." I do not think that those activities count toward real work. But he said, "if you really think you did nothing by staying home, you

³³ Slee, 97.

³⁴ According to Slee, "the divided self" is one expression of alienation. Ibid., 84.

³⁵ Ibid., 81.

³⁶ Ibid.

are and will be an unhappy person for the rest of your life." I feel I have wasted all day just being a busybody when others are working.

Insook suffered a sense of stuckness in the forms of futility and ineffectiveness, a feeling of "doing nothing," "just being a busybody," and wasting away. Insook's view of housewife's work can be influenced by the values of "industrial society," which

has developed the perception of housewife status as a self-worthless, alienated social role, with low self-esteem, incompetency and disorientation from the future, etc.³⁷

Insook does not consider a housewife's work a "real work" which correlates to "making money." Insook's complaint to her husband delivers the sense of alienation, futility.

Or, it could be an expression of her yearning for a career. Both of her conflicting yearnings may be authentic. Accordingly, I evaluate Insook as a divided self. She may not recognize consciously that she has both yearnings for a housewife and a career.

Insook seems stuck between these two, seemingly contradicting yearnings.

Getting Stuck: Wife Working inside and outside the Home

It seems ironic that Kisook suffers from working inside and outside the home, which could be an ideal situation for Insook. Kisook said,

in America, women need to work to support the family, both inside and outside the home... My husband is influenced by Korean male-centered tradition. He asked me today to do something, even though I was very busy doing something else. The sacrifice of women today is similar to Jesus dying on the cross. We women including myself experience dying on the cross in every moment of our daily lives.

According to Kim and Hurh's study, Korean "working wives" suffer "double burden" of fulfilling the work and family roles, which is compounded by their husbands' "non-involvement" since

³⁷ Boo, 81.

the Korean husbands are not found to increase their *relative* performance of the household tasks. Nor are the Korean husbands expected to perform more, even when their wives are employed.³⁸

Kisook's case coincides with Kim and Hurh's findings about Korean wives' double burdens and the husbands' non-involvement. Kisook's burden of working two roles as a wife and a worker seems to be far more than what she can bear when she describes her suffering as "dying on the cross." Despite the dual burden which gradually drains life energy from her, Kisook is proud to be needed by her customers and her husband.

Because my customers appreciate my work, their referrals bring continuous work. I feel thankful for the customers. My customers need me. My husband needs me so much that he does not allow me to go visit Korea.

Kisook's success with the customers seems to strengthen her self-worth, while making her physically exhausted. Her husband's neediness, even when she is busy, further confirms her self-worth. Kisook is a divided self holding two potentially contradicting desires of wanting to be needed by her customers and husband and wanting to take care of herself by working moderately and getting help from her husband at home. She is getting stuck between her two contradicting desires.

Being Stuck: Playing Role of Submissive Wife to Husband

Okja is a case where a Korean woman is stuck while playing the role of a lifelong, submissive wife to her demanding husband. The following two statements from Okja describe her impasse. The first one is from the workshop and the other from the interview.

When I was young, I thought it was better to sacrifice my life for my children. I supported my husband even if we got into a fight and he angered me because I

³⁸ Kim and Hurh, 28-29.

didn't want to have him accuse me of being irresponsible. But my husband still expects such unequal support from me at my old age, which drives me to run away from home especially when I cannot talk to anyone about it. On one winter day, an upsetting argument drove me out of home. Since I could not drive, I walked around in the neighborhood. Then, I went into a shopping mall because it was warm inside. It felt little bit better after returning home from such a deviation, but that was only temporary. I still feel similar pain after such arguments.

Okja has been enduring her husband's bad treatment for decades. She is *literally* stuck at home because she cannot drive. This physical limitation makes her impasse or stuckness more overwhelming. A year after the workshop, her situation did not improve. In the follow-up interview, she said.

The hatred toward my husband, after reaching the limit of practicing Jesus' love, did not go away. After a brief sign of change and feeling okay, it's back to hating my husband again. But I cannot hate him because he is my husband. Hence, I live like a fool, taking all that bad treatment from my husband. Other people remind me of that also. Despite of it, I cannot continue to think that way, for I am a Christian who must show love. It is very difficult for me to convince myself, if "I sacrifice, then he can be saved." It has gotten worse now especially when he stirs things at home again where I get the urge to run away from home. But just as I want to give up, he looks more pitiful. Who would takes care of him when I do not? I feel it is my responsibility to look after his soul. If not, he will torture our children as he did to me. At least now, I express my discontent, "I don't want to see you" when he scorns me, but at the same time I feel pity for his soul.

Okja is a divided self. She cannot "run away" from her abusive husband since she is stuck between her conflicting interests and desires. She is divided between her traditional wifely responsibility to be an obedient, submissive wife and her urge to run toward human dignity and freedom. The split is not just from the conflict between Korean traditional value and American value. Okja is torn between the "hatred" and "pity" toward her husband, which correlates as a conflict between *jung* (love) and *han* (hate). Making it worse, Okja perceives her conflict in "either" or "or" terms. In other words, she is split between two conflicting desires, to take care of *either* herself *or* her pitiful

husband, and *either* herself *or* her children. She is torn between two desires, *either* following Jesus' love *or* loving herself.

The observation of Okja as the divided self in many levels involves several important issues that require further discussion. First, hatred towards the husband is the most committed sin of Korean wives. Okja's case may be the extreme of Korean husband's mistreatment of his wife. But many Korean-American women have at least one common reason to hate their husbands. Kumhee said,

the situation is better in Korea than here where in America both men and women work to support the family and yet men still expect women to do all of the house chores after the same hard works. This makes most Korean women in America angry toward their husbands.

Kumhee's view coincides with Kisook's complaint about her husband's insensitivity to her working inside and outside of the home. It is a common thing to hear Korean women, even in her sixties and seventies, complaining that their husbands treat them as if they were a "maidservant." Women's anger towards their husbands itself is not necessarily a sin, but it could become a sin when they turn their anger into "hatred," as Okja did. I brought this issue to the workshop group. All women, including Okja, agreed on the need to express the negative emotions toward their husbands. A year after we had this discussion, Okja's situation has not improved much. But there is a hopeful sign in that Okja started moving out of her "muteness" or "silence."³⁹ Now, she expresses her discontent by saying, "I hate you so much. But I feel thankful for living with me for over forty years." Apparently, Okja has learned to take care of *both* herself *and* her imperfect

³⁹ According to Slee, "muteness" is one of many forms of alienation. Alienation can be experienced by women in various forms such as "silence," "desert," "deadness," "alienation," "impasse." Slee, 86-107.

husband. Now, Okja has a new task in extending her small and yet significant victory toward overall relationship with her husband.

Being Stuck: Following the Way of the Cross

Okja has one more important "*either*" or "*or*" dilemma to solve, her dilemma of choosing *either* following Jesus' love *or* loving herself. The biggest motivation for Okja to endure her husband's mistreatment, even after her children are grown, is to follow "Jesus' love," which was demonstrated through his suffering and sacrifice on the cross.

The connection between the women's sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice was often observed in the research participants.

Kisook: The sacrifice of women today is similar to that of Jesus dying on the cross. We women, including myself, experience dying on the cross in every moment of our lives. Because of our experience of dying on the cross every day, we can be more thankful when we go before God.

Kumhee: Someone is fulfilling the needs of others as Jesus died for us as someone needed to do. Likewise, isn't that similar to us sacrificing our lives for the others? Shouldn't the serving others, taking care of husband and kids, bring joy and match up well with the spirit of Christianity?

In Kumhee's and Kisook's statements, Korean women's sacrifice is ideologically supported by Jesus' sacrifice. On the other hand, there are subtle differences between these two women and Okja. Okja was honest about her "limit of practicing Jesus' love" as well as her doubt about the value of the sacrificial life by calling herself "a fool." But Kisook and Kumhee give all positive meanings to women's sacrificial life. Kisook was "thankful" for her being able to know and appreciate Jesus' sacrifice more intimately. Kumhee argued that sacrificing herself for others "brings joy." However, it seems difficult for other women to find joy from sacrificing themselves. When asked, "how would God see you?," Kisook blurted out her suicidal thoughts.

Kisook: I sometimes think of ending my life when the life is too hard for me. (Pause) There were times when I thought about ending my life even though I should not. I thought it may bring rest from the suffering. It is difficult to suppress my will all the time. But should not God be glad about my effort? I do not know.

Na: Do you think God will be glad if you suppress your will?

Kisook: God's words say to die and give up our will. Our pastor also says to lay down our willfulness.

Kisook did not mention the exact cause of her suffering. However from the context, it shows Kisook and her husband have "very different personalities," which may be the cause of the suffering. Living as a submissive, sacrificial wife probably is difficult for Okja, Kisook, and Hanna.

Being Stuck: Playing Three Roles of Mother, Wife, and Daughter-In-Law

Korean women are expected to take the role of a submissive, sacrificial wife not only in relation to her husband but in relation to husband's extended family. Joohee's and Hanna's impasses involve their parents-in-laws.

Joohee: I had a son 3 years after my daughter. When my mother-in-law criticized me for not producing a son, I became determined to have a son and did everything for it. But when I finally had a son, my son tortured me for a year by not sleeping but crying all night. I have wasted away my life, attending both mother-in-law in Korea and my family in America.

Hanna: I had suffered a serious depression at one point. I constantly cried for almost 3 months. My husband said that it may be from the devil and we should pray and worship more. So, we prayed and worshipped together at home. But my mouth only verbalized the words when we were worshipping. I read the words only with my eyes, not registering any of God's presence. It was dreadful and finally made me demand God to show what is the problem that is causing this pain. During this prayer of desperation, God showed me the cause of my constant depression. We fled Korea for America from my husband's family. We have been financially supporting my husband's family for the past 31 years, but they were not thankful or satisfied with the amount we have been giving to them although it would be substantial for our family. The constant pressure to support them without any gratification made us flee from Korea.

It sounds strange for parents-in-law from far distance to exert such a destructive influence over the lives of their son and daughter-in-law. Andrew Sung Park's idea of "a collegial self" helps understand the Korean, parent-child relationship.

In the East the self is not individualistic but exists in terms of its indivisible relation with parents. Although the self is distinguishable from the parents, it also is inseparable from the parents. A self disconnected from its parents is broken; it lack wholeness... The impact of the parents upon the formation and life of a child cannot be exaggerated. A child also permanently changes the nature of parents' existence.⁴⁰

Indissoluble bonds between the parents and child explain the Korean people's preoccupation with the practice of "filial piety" in relation to their parents.⁴¹ From this perspective of filial piety, the struggles of Joohee and Hanna started to make sense. Joohee's or Hanna's marriage to her husband also means the marriage to her husband's parents since both are inseparable. Being a sacrificial mother, obedient wife, and daughter-in-law was an unbearable burden for Joohee and Hanna. Several women, besides Joohee and Hanna, during the interview, alluded to negative experiences with their parents in-laws and other extended family members. Considering these women's reservation to tell all family matters to protect the privacy, there are probably more Korean women suffering from the negative in-law relationships.

The hardships suffered by these two women demonstrate a danger of blindly beautifying motherly or parental love. According to Carolyn Osiek, "mother figure" or "maternal power" can be "comforting, nurturing, assuring," but it can also be

⁴⁰Andrew Sung Park, *Racial Conflict and Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 81.

⁴¹ Ibid., 81.

"controlling, dominating, overbearing."⁴² Parents and mothers could demand the returns from their children for their life-long giving or even without giving much to their children. Motherly love does not necessarily extend towards daughter-in-laws. Parental or motherly love is not flawless.

Breakthroughs: Through Revelation and Small Awakenings

"Impasse" is not necessarily negative since according to relational cultural theory (RCT), it can be "the royal road to change."⁴³ In one's growth towards maturity, backward movements can occur. The importance is one's ability to "'move,' to respond, rather than become caught" in the impasses.⁴⁴ Slee resonates with RCT by seeing that impasse is not the final word and women's impasse is often followed by "awakening," which refers to women's "experience of breakthrough."⁴⁵ I will discuss two types of breakthrough stories, one through the revelation and the other through awakenings.

Breakthrough: Through Revelation

For Hanna, faith alone was not enough to save her from a bottomless depression. Hanna needed God's intervention to overcome the impasse.

⁴² Carolyn Osiek, *Beyond Anger: On Being a Feminist in the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 53-54. This characterization of maternal figure or maternal power is done in the context of Osiek's discussion of "the elementary feminine," which build on "Jungian historian of Religions," Erick Neumann. Ibid., 52.

⁴³ Bergman and Surrey, "Couple Therapy," 175.

⁴⁴ Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Learning in Psychotherapy Consultation and Supervision," in *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 26.

⁴⁵ Slee, 109.

God showed me in prayer that even though we have provided financially, I have not loved them but resented them and was boastful of my supports. It was hard to love them when they angrily argued with us for the amount of money we provided. However, as I realized that the resentment towards my husband's family was the cause and asked God for forgiveness, my heart became soft and the hatred went away. Instead, I felt sorry for his soul and the love of God towards them sprang up in my heart. As I repented and prayed about them in tears, my whole body became hotter and I began speaking in tongue with unintelligible words. Since the experience, the depression never came back. I gained the power to heal the depressions of other people when I consult and pray with them. Their depressions were healed afterward. I do not think badly about the depression anymore, for it gave me an opportunity to experience God's supernatural healing and to become closer to God. Also, the relationship became better with my husband's family now where they are appreciative of our support for them. God has completely solved our longstanding issue.

Revelation seems an appropriate interpretive key to read Hanna's experience since her breakthrough experience started with God's disclosing or revealing her true heart, which was full of "resent[ment]" and "boastful[ness]." Here, I am using the term "revelation" with an intention to stress the transformative quality of her experience. According to Craig R. Dykstra in his work *Vision And Character*,

through revelation we do encounter mysteries....Revelation is an experience of the transformation of the imagination, and that our character-our fundamental way of seeing and living- changes when this transformation take place.⁴⁶

Hanna's experience of revelation resulted in the "ability to see herself and everything around her" differently.⁴⁷ She began to see her "resentment" "as the cause" and "felt sorry for the worldly soul [of her father-in-law] and the love of God [towards her parents-in-law] sprang up in [her] heart." Hanna experienced the transformation of "the shape of her imagination" regarding herself and her parents-in-law.⁴⁸ Dykstra argues,

⁴⁶ Craig D. Dykstra, *Vision and Character: A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 69.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

revelation is the conversion of the imagination and takes place only when the revelatory images become ingrained in the psyche and provide the framework for all our seeing and living.⁴⁹

Consequently, revelation brings about the permanent effects of one's whole person and character. It was the permanent effect for Hanna when she said, "my depression completely disappeared," "God has completely solved our longstanding issue."

Hanna's transformation came with God revealing what Hanna thought to be the truthful images of herself, which resulted in the healing relationship with her parents-in-law. Her transformation confirms RCT's emphasis on changing internalized, dysfunctional relational images in order to change one's relational patterns. It can be noted that the true images from God of herself were the "resent[ment]" and "boastful[ness]," which Western feminists in general would consider self-negating and thus dysfunctional for women. But for Hanna, these negative self images functioned positively, which resulted in healing from the depression and from the broken-relationships with parents-in-laws and with God. Agreeing with Dykstra, revelation is to encounter mysteries.

Breakthrough by Awakening: "It Is Unfair to Call Our Sacrifice Sin!"

Hanna's breakthrough story has a permanent quality involving God's "supernatural" intervention such as the gifts of speaking in tongue and healing. However, breakthrough can happen through the ordinary things such as women's participation in a small, women-only workshop group like ours and thereby learning new feminist ideas

⁴⁹ Dykstra, 79-80.

which could bring changes in their thoughts and actions. Here is the workshop discussion on a feminist idea of sins of women.

Na: Could it be that for women, the lack of self, lack of self development, or lack of self care is more problematic than having too much pride?

Kumhee: After the marriage, women instinctively stay home, take care of the children, and support their husbands, sacrificing their self developments. Would you call that a sin rather than the sacrifices based on faith which deserves the praises from God? Would you still call it a sin when it is inevitable for women to stay home raising young children and supporting the husband, which may contribute to the underdevelopment of women? Could we not satisfy to think that we have fulfilled our role to our best by raising successful second generation? I think, the real sin is, rather than thanking women for supporting family and considering women as equal partners, the men view the women less importantly. My mother scorns me for being a house wife after putting me through the college. I think she is influenced by the society in which the meaningful work is having a career outside the home. ...Doesn't taking care of family bring as much sense of achievement as making great contributions to society? I have a regret for not investing more towards my own development. But I don't think that it is a sin.

Kumhee's statement insinuates a degree of indignation she felt when her sacrifice for the family was underestimated. Kumhee employed four reasons why women's caring work for the family should be honored. First, women are "instinctively" caring. Second, God calls women to care for the family. Third, staying home and caring for the children are not voluntary but "inevitable" choices. Caring for the family at home is "meaningful work" and a "career" as much as "a career outside the home." Fourth, mothering is a career.

Kumhee's first and second points are weak. In the previous section titled, "I am woman...", Kumhee derived a divine sanction from the biological perspective, by arguing that

it is the nature of women to be caring for others. God gave women bosoms to feed the babies... I think God made the physical features for that purpose.

However, according to Nancy Chodorow, what Kumhee sees as women's caring "nature" or caring "instinct" is more likely to be the result of women's socialization rather than biological or physical.⁵⁰ From Chodorow's perspective, women's God-given "nature" for caring based on biology is a weak argument. But Kumhee's last two points that women's caring is an "inevitable" choice and to be considered as a valid career need more attention.

It has been long since the majority of Western feminists deserted their initial, anti-motherhood attitudes of seeing motherhood as something to be "completely rejected" or "downplayed" and started recognizing that

it is not motherhood that is the obstacle to freedom, but racism, lack of jobs, skills, education, and a number of issues.⁵¹

Among the sixteen research participants, one has a tax related career. Four women are unpaid family workers who once ran or currently run small businesses such as drycleaner, pickup store, chicken restaurant, or pet store. Two women worked as office-cleaners with their husbands. One woman works at a deli store. Because of the language barrier and lack of skills, the type of jobs available to Korean immigrant women are limited and often labor-intensive with minimal income.⁵² These limited job opportunities are what Kumhee meant by women's "inevitable" choice. The discussion continued.

⁵⁰ Chodorow, *Reproduction*, 39, 211.

⁵¹ Bonnie J. Miller-Mclemore, "What's a Feminist Mother to Do?," in *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 190.

⁵² The majority of women in the study are graduates of colleges in Korea. However, this relatively high education level does not help their career development in America because of the language barrier.

Kumhee: I think the real work is that which helps me and others as it contributes to the betterment of society. Women who work to earn just enough towards the livelihood are not different from the women who stay home and raise the family efficiently by managing the resources wisely.

Rose: If one earns little, then it may be more costly because of expenses such as outside babysitting.

Joohee: My mother-in-law wishes I do more than just being a good housewife by working in a business. She thinks I am just home enjoying the hard earned salaries of my husband... But, I would tell my mother-in-law, "my husband earns the money that is physically seen, while I earn the money that is not seen. All the transportation, feeding, taking care require spending money wisely. I am also earning money that is not seen." I told her, "you are too greedy."

Considering meager wages that many Korean women receive from working outside the home, being a housewife can often be more economical and practical. Kumhee and Joohee stress that housewives are in fact making intangible money, the money that "is not seen." The work by necessity, Kumhee asserts, cannot be more meaningful than housewives' work which could contribute more significantly towards the "betterment of society." Kim and Huh's study supports Kumhee's assertion since they found that it is hard to "develop a new careerism" from the Korean women's "employment as a necessity in their struggle to establish a minimum economic security for their families in the United States."⁵³ Moreover, Kumhee's view on "real work" resonates with the feminist awareness that "motherhood and domestic matters" must be recognized

for their critical place in human survival and for the real hours of labor that they entail.⁵⁴

⁵³ Kim and Hurh, 30.

⁵⁴ Miller-McLemore, 192.

The realization that motherhood is "real work" can help Korean women like Insook get out of her sense of futility or ineffectiveness of being a fulltime housewife. Later, in the final evaluation for the workshop, Insook articulated her breakthrough experience,

no matter where and what my role is, as long as I can claim all of my respectable rights, I am fulfilling my woman leadership.

Like Insook, Korean women demand their caring work at home to be recognized and valued.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Slee stresses that awakening is "not a once-for-all experience," but it occurs repeatedly,⁵⁵ especially through the "ordinary, concrete and mundane experience(s)."⁵⁶ Insook's new awareness about her housewife role is such kind of ordinary, repeated awakening. I observed many moments of small awakenings in our women only group. This confirms the Slee's and other feminists' argument that the "female community" is an important "environment of potential liberation."⁵⁷ On the other hand, Slee stresses that awakening must extend to "a wide range of arena," beyond the female-only environments "which feel "safe and accepting" to women."⁵⁸ In this sense, I regard highly of Okja's achievement. Once Okja was awakened to the importance of expressing her true feelings to her husband, she was able to extend her newly acquired power to name her true feelings to the arena of home by telling her husband "I hate you but..." This kind of risk taking is not always easy to practice. It is even more difficult to continue practicing. For example, the women were awakened to

⁵⁵ Slee., 113.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the necessity of asking the men at SKPC to share the kitchen chores and they put it to practice. But this practice lasted only for a short while.

Breakthrough by Negotiation

Hanna's impasse with her husband's family was overcome once and for all through God's revelation. However, Hanna's impasse with her husband was not. Hanna's dream of becoming a minister is fulfilled by her husband who has become a minister himself. Moreover, he has not allowed Hanna to be in front of the congregation or to be in any visible roles. Nevertheless, Hanna does not give up on her calling. Instead, she creatively adopts to her limited situation through negotiation. When she was younger, Hanna gave up her dream "for the peace of family" while suppressing her anger. Now in her sixties, her way of dealing the conflicts with husband has changed as Hanna explained during the interview.

Hanna: Nowadays, I ask first the things that I really want to do and he usually approves. He sees the results of my prayers in the church. My back was healed. My children's problems got resolved, and his problems also got solved. Therefore, he does not object to my times in the church and prayers.

Na: What if your husband does not approve what you want to do?

Hanna: I asked my husband to pray for a special teaching session I was giving in the last retreat, but he said, "why do you have to teach in front of people when there are many pastors in your church." I couldn't repute him. Despite his objection, however, I did what I have already promised. I will also continue to do intercessory prayer meetings no matter what. But I will not do representative prayers, because I do not want to hurt my husband's feelings.

Hanna's negotiation strategy is to give up non-essential matters and yet keep the essential things. For example, she canceled her scheduled representative prayer on Sunday worship, which she weighs as less important than her interest of not hurting the

"husband's feeling." However, she decided to do her "special teaching session" during the church retreat despite her husband's disapproval.

Hanna said that her husband "sees the results of [her] prayers ..., therefore he does not object." Hanna has *earned* her right to negotiate through her hard work. Seeing God working through Hanna's prayers, her husband became more permissible to her prayer related activities in the church as long as she does not stand out. Hanna's breakthrough by negotiation is incomplete and compromised. Nevertheless, I have concluded that Hanna's negotiation is a type of breakthrough after examining her faith drawing where she wrote "we[my husband and I] hope to say that we were happy in Jesus' love." Korean woman in her age does not express their love towards the husband outwardly. In her drawing, I could read her love for the husband, more precisely her determination to love and keep a happy marriage through Jesus' love. Considering the importance of her husband in Hanna's life, negotiation seems the best way to show the respect for her husband and to live her humble dream of serving God quietly.⁵⁹ Furthermore, a gradual, rather than a sudden, change better fits the Slee's definition of breakthroughs.

I Am a Leader

Andrew Sung Park in his book *Racial Conflict and Healing* criticizes Korean-American churches' dual attitudes toward women, which expect

women to work harder than men, yet do not recognize women's leadership in their churches.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For her Hanna's faith drawing, look at Appendix A.

⁶⁰ Park, *Racial Conflict*, 44.

Park defines it as "religious exploitation" where Korean Christian women performing various manual jobs in the church without the church's willingness to ordain "women elders" and women pastors.⁶¹ I agree with Park that hard working Korean women in the church must be recognized. I have no doubt that Korean churches cannot survive without the dedication of these women. But Park's word "exploitation" concerns me because it implies victimization. According to my research, Korean Christian women are not mere victims. The issue of women leadership is very complex and require closer attention.

I Am Not a Leader of the Church. Yes, You Are!

When asked, during the interview, if they are the leaders of church or have leadership in the church, most women replied with a definite "no." The following paragraphs detail the women's reservation in calling themselves leaders.

1) No Leadership But Love for Each Person

Na: Have you thought of yourself as having a leadership in the church?

Hanna: I don't think I have a particular attribute of leadership. But at least I have the desire and love to help all in the church stand firm in their faith because they all are part of the Christ community. During one of my prayers, God told me that everyone in this earth is precious. Therefore, we do not have the right to judge anyone but to love, for each and everyone is precious. I have that love in me.

2) No Leadership But Wanting to Serve Quietly

Na: Have you thought of yourself as having a leadership in the church?

Heejung: (without hesitation) No, I do not want that kind of responsibility but rather would like to serve quietly in the background.

Na: You used to be a leader of women's group before, weren't you?

⁶¹ Park, *Racial Conflict*, 44. Manual jobs, Park illustrates, include "preparing for fellowship, reception, meals, washing dishes, and cleaning the church." Ibid. Fortunately, SKPC permits the ordination of women elders and pastors since it is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Heejung: It was not from my will, but the situation at the time forced me to take up the position because there was no one to take the job. Beside, that position was to serve rather than a title, and I continued to serve the church from that position.

3) No Leadership But Willing Attitude

Kisook: Once I told my pastor that I am not just a member of congregation. I am just a powerless woman deacon. But, who knows, someday I can be used by God as a faithful woman who is willing to risk my life with great enthusiasm in order to please God.

Na: Do you think that you have the leadership?

Kisook: No, not at all. The deaconess is just a title for me. I have said I am a hidden worker who serves in the background.

Na: You have just said you are not a mere member of the congregation.

Kisook: That's only from the willing attitude rather than the actual act.

Na: A hidden worker? Are you sure you did not think of you as having a leadership?

Kisook: No, I only consider myself as a peace maker. I don't think I am qualified to be a leader. But who knows in the future?

It was perplexing to hear these women saying emphatic "no" to my question about leadership. All three are active leaders of SKPC. Kisook and Heejung are deacons. Hanna is a pastor's wife. It is customary for Korean churches not to appoint pastors' wives to specific church positions. Accordingly, a pastor's wife called *Samo* [in Korean] is considered a leadership position. Further, Hanna leads the intercessory prayer meetings at SKPC every Friday night and serves as a leader of women's cell group. Kisook is the leader of education department for the church. Knowing that they are the active leaders, I could not accept their words at face value. I tried to find the real reasons for their outright denial on leadership.

There are several clues. Kisook's refusal to acknowledge her leadership may be viewed from the notion of "meta-statement," which interviewees used to deliver a sense

of failure to meet the "expectations" of "the dominant culture."⁶² Kisook's meta-statement, "I don't think I am qualified to be a leader," can be interpreted as an effort to communicate her sense of failure to meet the Korean culture's expectations of a leader, not necessarily as her *own* denial of leadership. This interpretation can be reinforced when her meta-statement is juxtaposed with her statement, "I am just a helpless woman deacon but, who knows, someday I can be used by God as a faithful woman..." Kisook practically denies her earlier statement, "a powerless women deacon" by saying that she "can be used by God." From her inconsistent denials, I could see Kisook's yearning to be a leader who can please not just God but fulfill the cultural expectations.

Kisook's denial of leadership can be further interpreted from the perspective of "survival strategies."⁶³ According to Jung Ha Kim,

since women historically had little access to publicly acknowledged power and control, they have learned to use what resources they do have to survive by utilizing informal means of influence. Women's way of interacting with men to offset the power balance between them is also recognized and labeled by some feminist anthropologists... as manipulation from "behind-the scenes."⁶⁴

Considering her perception of herself as "a powerless woman deacon," Kisook's self-definition, "I am a hidden worker who serves in the background" can be interpreted as a "manipulation from 'behind-the scenes'." Claiming to be the hidden workers, Kisook and other Korean women can

maneuver various aspects of their lives without direct confrontation with and reactions from traditional authorities.⁶⁵

⁶² Sprague, 153.

⁶³ Jung Kim, 109.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

This type of survival oriented strategy is apparent in Elder Rose. During the analysis session she said,

being a female elder of the church made me more careful in what I say. People said I became quieter in the church after I became an elder. If I have an important thing to say, then I would ask respectfully to a male elder to speak for me. I think he likes the upper status even though we should be on the same level. When I have to ask the male elder to speak for me, I have to coax him to do it as a favor. That is an additional stress to a woman elder.

Elder Rose called her coaxing behavior "wisdom." Wisdom sounds far more affirming than manipulation.

Korean Women Define Leadership Differently

A closer examination of Hanna, Heejung, and Kisook's denial of leadership discloses that they all have negative images of leadership or leader, connecting it to the "right to judge " (Hanna) or "a title" (Heejung and Kisook). These negative perceptions toward the word "leader" or "leadership" become clearer when they juxtapose what they have with what they have not. Hanna does not "have a particular attribute of leadership" but "has the desire and love for each person." Heejung does not "covet leadership" or "step in front of people" but wants to "serve quietly in the background." Kisook, according to her own words, is not "qualified to be a leader" but has "the willing attitude," "faith," and "enthusiasm." Apparently, these women are against the images of a leader or leadership which are negatively perceived as domination and control over other people. None of the three seems aware of what they are really against. As a result, they said that they are not the leaders and do not have any leadership. However, these women are really communicating that they are not the type of leaders who dominate and control.

It is difficult to be enlightened to the possibility that there are different types of leadership. The following Kumhee's story illustrates this.

When I was trying to cook in the church kitchen this morning, people insisted that as a wife of the minister I should let the chores to other congregation members and concentrate on the spiritual things in the church. They wanted me to pray for them and to teach them the Bible. I wish I could do those for them instead of the kitchen chores. But I enjoy helping others in hands on ways rather than leading them. I am happy when I fulfill the needs of others. But I wonder why people are questioning my duty as a wife of the minister and criticizing that I am not doing what I am expected to do such as leading people with spiritual authority.

Kumhee differs from the other women who denied their leadership. She recognized that "helping others in hands on ways" is a legitimate leadership act. But Kumhee's different leadership style was not accepted by the people around her. When asked, "have you considered yourself as a leader of the church?," Kumhee answered "yes, I have in some ways although I am not a strong leader." Kumhee's evaluation of her leadership as not being "strong" seems to reflect the others' negative evaluation of her leadership.

Advocating different leadership styles for the women had an empowering effect.

During the interview with Mija, I challenged her,

Na: Should a leader always be in front of others? Could the leader also influence the others by staying back?

Mija: I told people back in Korea after seven years in America that I don't do much church work in America as I did in Korea. The people replied, I don't need to be active in order to influence people. I thought the leader is the one who is in front and shouts out few commands and the others would be influenced by that. But if just being myself can influence others, could this mean that I have a leadership also?

Mija's image of leadership is being "in front" and "shout[ing] out few commands," which is not different from the other women's image of leaders who dominate and control. In fact, Korean women have not experienced various leadership role models other than their male pastors. The most dominant leadership model among Korean pastors is the

"benevolent, authoritarian dictator." According to Kennon L. Callahan, this dictator type of leaders

see themselves as primarily benevolent, wishing for "the good of the whole"- according to their own definition of *good*. They see themselves exercising "strong leadership," meaning that they insists on things being done *their* way.⁶⁶

A dictator leadership, Callahan explains, is an extreme case of a "boss" type of leadership.⁶⁷ Mija's description of leaders who "shout out few commands" reminds me of bosses and dictators. No wonder Mija initially denied her leadership. But with my challenge, Mija became open to the possibility of having a different leadership style just by being herself. Once Kumhee evaluated herself as "not a strong leader." From the monopoly of only one type of leadership, Kumhee's self-evaluation could be read as a clarification that she is not the boss or dictator type of leader.

Kumhee's and Mija's cases show that advocating different kinds of leadership in the church is an urgent issue. During the interview, however, Yonghee displayed a very different understanding of leadership than the other women. When asked to evaluate her own leadership, Yonghee responded.

My initial thought of a good leader was to sacrifice myself for the group. But I realized a better leader is the one who can motivate everyone to get involved in the group. That is what I will continue to strive for. For example, if we need cooked dishes for a fellowship, I tend to take up many more dishes than the other members because some members work long hours, some have a baby to take care of, and the others are not financially able. But I don't think this was a good way to handle the situation because a good leader should get everyone involved with whatever or however they can contribute.

⁶⁶ Kennon L. Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 49.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

Yonghee's account of leadership is intriguing in several ways. First, it shows that Korean women can perceive sacrifice as a norm not only for being mothers and wives but also for being church leaders. It is also illuminating that Yonghee outgrew sacrificial leadership for a "better" leadership style.⁶⁸ Second, what Yonghee describes as a "good leader," that is, the one who "should get everyone involved with whatever or however much they can contribute" echoes the feminist emphasis on mutuality and is in contrast to the dictator type of leadership. A good leader Yonghee envisions is kind of leader who empowers the others to do their own ministry. According to William J. Carter in his book *Team Spirituality*,

the basic task of the designated leadership is to discover the gifts of the members of the body and provide them arenas for expression.⁶⁹

Yonghee's idea of empowering leadership could extend to sharing unique gifts of each group members, far more than merely sharing cooking responsibilities. Third, empathy plays an important role in Yonghee's taking a leadership role. For example, using her empathy, Yonghee sought for what the group members would consider to be good for themselves. The use of empathy can prevent one from becoming a dictator who decides what is good for the others.

⁶⁸ Yonghee's account reminds me of Gilligan's ethic of care in Chapter Two. Gilligan frames her three phases of moral development in terms of conflicts between self-regard and other-regard. Yonghee's initial leadership coincides with Gilligan's "goodness" perspective where women equate care with "self-sacrifice." Gilligan, 17-18. It is interesting to see that Yonghee outgrew her sacrificial leadership, not out of concern for self-care but her concern for the others, looking for a best way to serve them.

⁶⁹ William J. Carter, *Team Spirituality: A Guide for Staff and Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 22.

Korean Women Are Virtual Leaders of Churches

The women's disapproval of their leadership is the disapproval of negative images of leadership in connection with control and domination. Korean women exercise leadership differently by loving, serving, helping, doing little things, or being herself, while not being able to recognize it as legitimate leadership. In their verbal rejection of leadership, some women are the hidden actors who make things happen through the manipulation from behind the scenes. Some women, though few in numbers, acknowledge different types of leadership by "helping others in hands on ways" or "motivating" others to do their own work. In summary, Korean women understand and practice leadership differently. Korean women's leadership seems invisible and underdeveloped when we view the leadership only in terms of the "title" or position. There are small number of women pastors and women elders. However, the women are the actual leaders of the church in their own right, actively and enthusiastically helping, serving, and loving. What is needed for these women is to recognize the different kinds of leadership as legitimate and to demand their different leadership to be appreciated by the other members of the church.

I Am Not a Leader of Society

Korean women are the virtual leaders of the church despite their denial. However, Korean women's leadership in relation to society is a completely different story. When asked to evaluate her personal contribution toward society during the interview, Mija responded with emphatic "none" twice. I probed her, "don't you meet customers during your work?" Mija responded,

I had to quit my shop, for I have gotten ill. An American customer gave me a get well card, a fruit basket, and the biblical pictures through my daughter. I think I had good relationships with my American customers.

Apparently, Mija did not consider her work at the drycleaner pick-up store as a contribution to society, rather viewing it purely as a matter of her own survival. Similar to Mija, the majority of women I interviewed denied having any contribution to society. Unlike Mija, however, Kumhee, a lifetime wife of a pastor, responded affirmatively to the same question,

we contribute via church by saving people through the gospel and thus changing their lives. As a result, they have happier family lives, their children change for the better. I believe that we do affect the society.

Kumhee was conscious that her contribution to society is an indirect one since it is made through the church. Another interviewee Younghee said,

once a month, I go to the front of the US Capitol building and pray for America as part of a group called "Jericho." I have been blessed personally from this country such as medicare for my husband. I thank America for helping foreigners like us without discrimination. My son is a medical doctor and I thank America for giving opportunity for him to be that. I thank God all the time for this gentle nation and promise to pray for America.

Yonghee's effort to contribute to American society through her prayer is impressive but lacks a sense of mutuality. She seems to consider herself more as a beneficiary, rather than as a contributor. Her prayer was motivated by her personal interest in paying back the benefits her family received from the "gentle nation," America. Despite her citizenship, she called herself a "foreigner." Although their prayer and soul-saving work in and through the church should not be underestimated, Kumhee's and Yonghee's direct contributions to society by getting involved in tangible, societal matters, are lacking.

The caring interests of the women rarely went beyond the boundaries of local church and their extended family. For instance, after the dramatization of the parable of

ten virgins, Joohee presented to the group a story of how she "argued with" Jesus in order to save "[her] family, [her] husband's family and the relatives." There were rare cases where the women's caring interests extend beyond the boundaries of the church and family. For example, Hanna cared for the boys in a correctional facility in Korea. But even that caring involved a personal agenda of protecting her own kids. Hanna and Kisook devoted their energy to the intercessory prayers, focusing on the local congregations and the pastor(s) as the objects of caring. According to RCT, this narrow breadth of relational interests can be symptomatic of immaturity and thus need thorough examination.⁷⁰ I will examine the problem of Korean women's narrow relational interests in light of their restricted images of church and faith.

Korean Women's Restricted Image of Church

The women in the study understand the primary function of the church as a place to pray and worship. Mija and Joohee stress the importance of the church as a place to hear the "word of God" or "pastor's sermons." Kumhee sees the church as a place where her "faith is being fulfilled and supplied." Similarly, Insook sees the church in providing its members with "the appropriate assistance" for their "spiritual growth," while emphasizing that "just going to church does not automatically make people's faith grow." Minjoo views the church as "a community of believers" rather than "the physical building." Insook stresses the church as "a faith community" to pray and worship

⁷⁰ On the other hand, the women's seemingly narrow relational interests can be interpreted differently from Nel Noddings' ethic of care. According to Noddings' relational ethic, caring occurs in concrete human relationships or relational situations instead of "principle" or "virtues." Noddings, *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 2; Noddings, *Caring*, 5.

together. Kumhee expresses the church's importance for her "personal relationships."

Soonhee thinks the church as a special source of emotional comforts.

Church is like a mother... Being in church comforts me. When I feel desperate, I like to pray at the church. It makes me feel closer to God in front of the cross where it seems that God is right next to me during my prayer. The church is the place for comfort and the place to get an answer to a prayer.

Similar to Soonhee, Minjoo says that "being in the church comforts [her]." For Minjoo, the church is "a resting place."

In summary, the women view the church as the primary place of prayer, worship, and emotional comfort. Two observations stand out. The first is about individualism. The women overwhelmingly consider the church as a place where various individual needs are offered and met. While identifying the church as "not a building but a community of believers," Minjoo sees "the relationship between God and her" as the most important dimension of her church life. Kumhee and Mija think that the worship is primarily an individual act,

Kumhee: When we worship, we only think about God. We use our cell phones during the day, but at night those need to be charged. I think worshipping before God is like getting charged up from God.

Mija: The church is a place where I offer myself to God [through worship]. The church is a place to reflect on myself in front of God.

Kumhee considers thinking about other people during the worship "as a distraction." The worship should "focus on God and herself." Similarly, Mija's sole object of reflection during the worship is herself in relation to God. There is nothing wrong in perceiving the worship as an individual meeting with God. However, it becomes problematic in the absence of community since according to Harris,

we are only fully persons when we are in community and in communion with one another.⁷¹

The women's lack of a communal view is also seen in Rose who said, "at least, we commit our Sundays for the close relationship between God and me." This individualistic view seems to collapse the necessary "tension" between "the personal and the communal," which Harris emphasizes.⁷²

The second observation is the lack of understanding of the church as an institution to serve society. According to Maria Harris in her book *Fashion Me A People*, social service is one of the five critical functions of the church.⁷³ The women view the church as the source from which individual or group needs are addressed and fulfilled. However, no one sees the church as a place to provide service to society. This omission or "ignorance" is problematic according to Harris,

the absence of something is not neutral. It skews the balance of options we might consider, alternatives from which we might choose, or perspective that help us see.⁷⁴

This omission can hardly be the failure of individual Christian women. Rather, it seems to reflect the absence or lack of teachings in Korean-American churches that address the social service dimension of the church.

⁷¹ Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 29.

⁷² Harris, *Fashion*, 29.

⁷³ Ibid., 155. By social service, Harris means "social care, social ritual, social empowerment, and social legislation."

⁷⁴ Ibid., 69. In the quote, Harris is addressing Eliot Eisner's original concept of "the null curriculum," that is, "the curriculum that exists because it does not exist."

The following episodes from the seventh workshop help understand the Korean women's narrow perception of the church.

1) Closed Doors to the Society

Okja: Church doors are opened for everyone to come in.

Soonhee: Sometime when I just wanted to pray, the church doors were closed.

Joohee: In reality, all the doors are closed. It should be opened to anyone anytime, but the church has to be closed.

Eunhae: If we leave it open, there will be full of homeless people occupying it.

The women were concerned about the closed doors of the church although they should be opened all the time for prayers. When Okja mentioned opening the church doors, I expected an issue of opening doors to the underprivileged people of society to come up. Instead, Eunhae brought up an issue of "homeless people" only to blame them as the cause of church doors being closed. The opening doors applied only to their own church members or, at least, other church-goers.

2) The Church as the "House of God"

Rose: The reason why church is the house of God is that even unbelievers go to church during Christmas. Many people go to church at least once a year to clean their sins and make afresh resolutions for the following year.

Soonhee: How much would they repent and feel that they are sinners when those people visit church once a year?

Rose: Still those people feel that God exists, and going to a church is like going to the house of God. That is why people call the church, the house of God.

Soonhee: If they really believe that there is God and feel that they are sinners, then even once a week is not enough.

These statements show the struggle to decide what should be the church. By "the house of God," Rose considers an open and enlarged view of the church, which includes "unbelievers" or those "who feel God exists" but are not necessarily the church goers.

Soonhee opposed Rose' view by arguing that the church is meant for only those who are repented "sinners" and regular churchgoers. Soonhee distinguishes "the people outside of church" who "do not repent" and "the people that come into the church who repent and get blessed." I think this kind of in-group or out-group mentality contributes to the Korean church's indifference toward society and the people beyond the wall of the church.

Korean women are the virtual leaders of the church but are not the leaders of society. Their enthusiasm and hard work rarely go beyond the walls of their local churches. However, the women's self-serving attitudes, which neglect the social participation and social service, should not be seen as individual failures but a phenomenon of Korean-Americans' withdrawal from society. According to Andrew Sung Park,

encountering a language barrier, different foods, different social values, and racism in a new and strange land, most Korean-Americans tend to flock together, withdrawing into their Korean enclaves.⁷⁵

Park sees the Korean-American churches as contributing greatly in creating and maintaining "the ghettoization of Korean immigrants" while offering the "security and identity that [they] cannot find in the society."⁷⁶ Korean-American churches need to enlarge their narrow in-group view of church and make conscious efforts to participate in the leadership of mainstream society. Korean-American churches need to become a vanguard in Korean-Americans' exodus from the ghettoization in order to make a mark in history.

⁷⁵ Park, 94.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Korean Women's Restricted Image of Faith

The study shows that a narrow view of faith contributes to the Korean churches' apathy toward society in the same manner that the individualistic view of the church contributes to the women's lack of social concerns. In Chapter Five, I discussed how Joohee saw faith as a matter of getting "closer to God" and how her narrow understanding of faith made leadership irrelevant toward the matter of faith. During the seven week workshops, the issue of irrelevancy continued to haunt us. I decided to bring it up by asking, "when was a time your faith was challenged?" The following is the part of the responses.

Rose: I felt my faith was challenged when I had the conflicts within the church. Most conflicts in the church are about personal relationships.

Soonhee: That's not a faith issue because the conflict is between church members and yourself. If it is a faith issue, it is between God and me.

Rose: Personal relationships affect my faith negatively. If there is a conflict in the church, my faith suffers, my personal relationship suffers, and all other aspects of life suffer. Therefore, it is a challenge to my faith.

Soonhee: Faith is between God and me and not about the personal relationships with the church members.

A similar individualistic emphasis, which was seen in the women's dominant image of church, is found in Soonhee's assertion that faith is "between God and me." No one supported Rose's argument that human relationships can be a faith issue. Considering human relationships as a faith issue, Rose echoes a social and relational understanding of faith as advocated by James Fowler in his book *Stages of Faith*. According to Fowler, faith is the meaning-making activity that involves three parties: self, others, and transcendence or what Fowler calls "shared center(s) of value and power" or "shared

images of an ultimate environment.”⁷⁷ In this triadic pattern, one knows oneself, others, and the world as related to the transcendence.⁷⁸

However, later it turned out that Rose's seemingly relational view of faith is workable only within the boundary of the church. The following is from the co-analysis meeting with Rose and Kumhee.

Rose: The issues within the church are primary of God, but the issues outside of the church are about personal businesses, which are not of God.

Na: If one gave a false tax return knowingly, is it a faith issue?

Rose: That bothers my conscience.

Na: So, that is about the conscience, but not about faith?

Rose: No, at least I confess, hence it is about faith...

Na: Why do you confess to God if it is not about faith? If you confess to God, that means you think that it is about faith.

Rose: If you put it that way, then those issues outside the church can be faith issues when we confess to God. I use to separate faith between outside the church and within the church. But ultimately when I confess to God, then it connects to faith.

The discussion with Rose illustrates how the narrow understanding of faith can isolate Christians from society and make them powerless and unauthentic in the eyes of non-Christians. Rose was barely convinced that the issues "outside of church" can be a matter of faith as much as the issues "within the church." However, Kumhee maintained that the

⁷⁷ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 17, 92-93. "An ultimate environment" according to Fowler refers to "an environment of environments, in relation to which we make sense of the force field of our lives." Ibid., 28.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 273, 297. Fowler calls this kind of relational knowing as "constitutive knowing." Ibid., 103. Transcendence can refer to shared values, powers, or images and stories of reality one takes as ultimate. For more detailed information about the triadic shape of faith, see *Stages of Faith*, 17, 92, 93, 98.

relational issues between human beings are not essential but accessory to faith because they can be easily overcome by strong, mature faith.

If our faith matures, then any problem in human relationships can be overcome by the power of God based on our strong relationship with God.

For Kumhee, faith is fundamentally the personal relationship with God, which can be applied later to her relationships with others. Accordingly, human relationships are not considered as the essential faith matter. Apparently, an idea of faith as inherently inclusive of human relationships is unfathomable to Kumhee. Kumhee's incapacity to understand this seems originating from her deep-seated dualistic world view which separates divine and human things. During the co-analysis meeting, she argued,

when a woman decides to focus on getting her life back later in her life, I think she is pursuing a worldly thing. Worldly pursuits involve visible things such as material things, title, social status, money, and so on.

Kumhee is a dualist, separating the visible from the invisible and the worldly from the godly. According to Andrew Sung Park, people with an "dualistic" attitude

project God "out there," not underscoring that life is a journey to God and that God is *here*.⁷⁹

Dualists' "detachment" from the world is not necessarily a negative thing, which can be positively expressed as "unselfish genuine participation in the world of God."⁸⁰

However, dualists often lack "positive evaluation of this life and have "little concern with social transformation."⁸¹ Unfortunately, the positive manifestation of detachment is not

⁷⁹ Park, 97.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 97.

⁸¹ Ibid.

the case for most Korean Christians. Rather, the majority of them withdraw into the safety of Christian home and church to prevent becoming too worldly as seen in Kumhee.

Being Stuck Between Here (America) and There (Korea)

It is misleading to evaluate Mija's denial of her leadership in society as the mere byproducts of restricted images of the church and faith. Rather, she is stuck between a rock and a hard place where she does not have many choices. During the interview, Mija describes.

I did a visitation ministry when I was in Korea visiting mostly women who are in need. The church I served had over 1000 members, which made it very busy. When I came to America, everything changed. In Korea, most women stayed home, but here, all go out and work. I also worked to make a living, which afforded me no time during the day. Only on weekends, I was able to visit with my pastor. In America, I work in a drycleaner pick-up store, while in Korea I served as a full-time visitation minister. I don't think I am doing as much of God's work in here as in Korea. Therefore, I do not consider what I am doing in church, a ministry. In Korea, a minister's duty is not considered a job but a calling. Over there, ministers work full-time from Tuesday to Sunday. But here, only Sunday is for the ministry and other days are for the regular job. It is hard to say I am doing much of God's work.

Mija constantly compares a life here in America and a life there in Korea. There, she was a full-time visitation minister. But here, she is a part-time only.⁸² There, her work was her "calling." But here, she works for living. There, she was "very busy" doing God's work. But here, she is not "doing much of God's work." In comparing "here" and "there," Mija communicates a sense of impasse and nostalgia. As an immigrant minister with no other skills, she had to do everything for survival, even working at a drycleaner pick-up store which is not her dream job. Nevertheless, she could still have found some

⁸² In Korea, it is customary that non-ordained, female seminary graduates work for visitation ministry for female congregations.

meaning in her least dream job. However, the weight of life seems too much to explore new meanings. There is a deep sense of defeatism in her tone, "I am not proud of what I am doing." Overwhelmed by the sense of impasse, Mija is not yet ready to live out the possibility of a new life in America as a member of mainstream society.

The life of Mija is "marginal," which means that she is "belong[ing] to both cultures, yet identify[ing] with neither fully."⁸³ Andrew Park, building on Sang Hyun Lee's "pilgrim theology," states that "marginality" is not necessarily disadvantageous but can be positively perceived as the "creative opportunities for pilgrimage."⁸⁴ But as for the first generation Korean immigrants like Mija, marginality often literally means marginal living. For these people, leadership in society may be an idea too noble to combine.

⁸³ Park, 96.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTENT ANALYSIS, PART 2: KOREAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S IMAGES OF GOD IN RELATION TO IMAGES OF SELF

Chapter Eight continues the content analysis on Korean-American women's relational images from Chapter Seven. The chapter begins by examining two dominant Christian self-images as a "child" and "daughter" of God and proceeds to explore five controlling God-images which are dominant among the women in the study. These five are "God the Father," "God of *shimjung*," "God who punishes," "God of paradox," and "living God." God the Father is the most dominant image of the five, and the other four can be considered its subcategories. The research shows that Korean-American women perceive God exclusively as the Father God and themselves as the daughters. Korean symbol of the Father God is multifaceted. A father God is the God of *shimjung* who understands the *shimjung*[heart] of his daughters. A father God is the God of paradox who uses his mighty power for his daughter's benefits. A father God is the living God who intimately relates to every detail of his daughters' lives using the multiple forms of communication. Korean women seem comfortable with the punishing image of God due to these various aspects of the father God. Korean-American women flourish in their exclusive use of father God images, which challenges the Western feminists' criticism of God the Father regarding power differential and emotional alienation. I will explore each image of God while paying close attention to their interrelationships.

I Am God's Beloved Daughter

This section examines two, dominant self-images of Korean Christian woman as a child of God and as a sinner. The sinner image was not explicitly recognized except in public prayers by the women but played an important role in their self-understandings.

I Am Your Child

The Korean women in the study almost always used "a child of God" to explain who she is and to define their relationships with God. "A daughter of God" is often used interchangeably with "a child of God." Interestingly, each word, child or daughter was used in a different relational context. Women used "a child" or "children" of God in relation to privilege and responsibility. The following examples deliver a sense of election or privilege. "I am God's child and a chosen one." "God has chosen me to be God's child because God loves me." "God gave me the privilege to become God's children. With that privilege, I can do everything." "I am always happy no matter how bad the circumstances are since I am a child of God." A child of God is also used to communicate a sense of responsibility, calling, mission, or task.

I am saved. As the child of God, I try to glorify God through my life, especially by intensely praying and reading the Bible.

I should love others and help out the people in need since I am a child of God.

Since I am a child of God, I have a mission to teach faith to my children and to carry out the responsibility of senior deacon faithfully.

If I am a child of God, I should not judge people who are different from me according to my own standard but be open to and pray for them.

Being a child of God means to live according to the will of God, following God's way.

As a child of God, I should be the one who fulfills the tasks assigned to me by the church.

A child of God ought not sin but always repent and pray.

Calling themselves a child of God, the women deliver a sense of privilege or responsibility. The majority of the women relates a child of God to punishment.

God punishes God's children out of love in order to make them perfect and thereby bless them.

Punishment is what God gives to his children to make their faith firmer, stronger, and more fruitful. Punishment is a training from God.

Punishment is in the same line of thought as election, privilege, and responsibility. A certain logical correspondence among election, privilege, responsibility, and punishment colors the term "a child of God" in a legal tone. "A child" or "children" of God has one more specific usage. It is used to argue for the equal rights for women.

We all are loved by God without the distinction of gender since we are equally the children of God.

This emphasis on equality strengthens the legal tone of "a child of God."

On the other hand, "a daughter of God" was used when the women delivered a sense of intimacy, comfort, or God's favoritism. When asked who she is, Hanna said without hesitation, "I am a beloved daughter of Father God." For Hanna, being God's daughter is a major source of comfort, especially during suffering.

When I am suffering and going through a tough time, just calling out "Father!" made me feel God is holding me as his beloved daughter.

Using the language of "daughter," Mija and Heejung communicate a sense of intimacy with God "the Father" and even God's favoritism toward an individual daughter.

Mija: God probably considers me as a lazy daughter. Since I am a daughter of God, no matter how bad I become, God will protect me and care for me as we love and care for our children. God will also provide the best for me like a father to his daughter.

Heejung: God will see me as a daughter who needs lots of help... God loves me a lot, but he thinks that I have a long way to go. I am not very faithful in praying and studying God's words. I am well short of what I have to do.

Despite their perceived failures as God's faithful daughters, Mija and Heejung expected care, love, protection, or "lots of help" rather than the punishment from God the Father. It is a big contrast to "a child of God" image where failures to live faithfully as God's child is thought to bring punishments. Korean women's use of "a daughter of God" delivers a sense of intimacy with God and God's favoritism toward an individual daughter rather than showing strict justice in punishing children's failures.

I Am a Sinner

The women in both workshop and interview called themselves "a child" or "a daughter" of God rather than a sinner. However, this does not necessarily mean that sinner is a weaker image than child or daughter. Instead, I found the women's self-image as a sinner has a strong grip on their faithful living. For example, the image of sinner is dominantly evoked in their public prayers. The following is a part of Minjoo's representative prayer during a Sunday worship service.

Father God, we thank you for being our shield and strength. We give you Lord all the glories. We thank you Lord for loving us, embracing us, and giving us the peace even though we should have been perished, for we are sinners. We ask to forgive our sins as we are determined to follow your will in our daily lives but fail because of our weaknesses. As we come before you with every sin that is known and unknown to us, forgive our sins and make us clean and give us true freedom and peace in you, Lord.

In Minjoo's prayer, there are several important clues to understand Korean women's self-understanding as a sinner. Minjoo's prayer shows a serious awareness of human status as the "sinners" who "should have been perished." Nonetheless, it should be noted, in her prayer the negative image of humanity as sinner is presented in conjunction with the

positive image as the ones who are loved, embraced, reconciled, saved, and forgiven. Minjoo's portrait of humanity as the forgiven sinners resonates with the "reformed" understanding of humanity as "both the judged and the loved."¹ According to Serene Jones a feminist theologian in her work *Feminist Theory And Christian Theology*, Minjoo's prayer which stresses both positive and negative human statuses satisfies "sin's rhetorical function."² Interpreting John Calvin's theology, Jones states,

all sin-talk should have the practical aim of nurturing our awareness of God's grace. Knowledge of sin should teacher us how to strengthen our faith; it should instruct us in love of God, prompting us to see God with greater zeal.³

A similar Calvinistic rhetoric is seen in Hanna's prayer.

Father God, I thank you for using us as your instrument despite our weaknesses. We know we have many shortcomings and faults, but you have called us to be with you as you recognize our longing to seek your face.

In Hanna's prayer, the grace of God in "using" and "calling" us is contrasted with the human "weaknesses," "shortcomings and faults." Hanna's last phrase, "our longing to seek your face" shows that Calvin's rhetorical intention achieved its goal.

A finding that these women rhetorically call themselves sinners does not necessarily mean that they take sin less seriously. Undoubtedly, the women in the research showed the extreme sensitivities to sin. For example, a phrase "every sin that is known and unknown to us" was typically used among them. Heejung said, "the first thing I do as soon as I wake up every morning is to ask God for forgiveness." The

¹ Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 57.

² Ibid., 99.

³ Ibid.

following statements communicate the women's serious recognition of themselves as the sinners.

Soonhee: No matter the size, sin is sin. God said in the Bible that the blinking of our eyes and even the whispers are sins... I think twice about sinning even during disciplining my grandchildren... Constantly confessing my sins that I can and cannot remember by attending morning prayers at the church and praying before going to bed relieves my burdensome heart.

Okja: Just a thought of sinning is a sin. Committing sin not only in action but in thought constitutes a sin. Whenever a thought of sinning comes into my mind, I become fearful and ask God for forgiveness.

Soonhee and Okja displayed an exhaustive list of sins, which includes even the "blinking of our eyes," sins that she "cannot remember," and "just a thought of sinning." Such an acute awareness of their actual and potential sins led them to be "fearful," to have "burdensome heart," and to live in constant need of God's forgiveness.

According to Jones, the Reformation emphasis on the double status of "both the judged and the loved" is not intended to make us fearful and burdensome but be "freed to live joyfully, praising God."⁴ Jones asserts, reverberating Calvin, "in this life because of sin," a sense of "incompleteness" is inevitable to us,

but this incompleteness never eclipses the importance of the real transformation that occurs in persons who know themselves to be loved and forgiven in Christ.⁵

Unlike the Reformed intention, however, both Soonhee and Okja seemed overwhelmed by the sins and an ensuing sense of incompleteness. I will trace the possible origins of the Korean women's acute sense of sin and guilt.

⁴ Jones, 57.

⁵ Ibid.

I Am Sinner: A Learned or Given Identity?

The following section examines two ways the women in the study came to know themselves as the "sinner."

Okja: I hated it when people told me I was a sinner. I could not recall the sins I have committed. Sometimes, I thought my harsh life may be due to all the sins I have unknowingly committed. I resented when our pastor mentioned "sinner," for I did not think I had committed that many sins and it was difficult to accept. But after attending church for awhile, I realized that the Bible said all are sinners because of Adam. Since then, the "sinner" did not upset me anymore. Now, I know that I am a sinner. We all are born with desires and greed, and "there is no one righteous." We all are sinners. When the hatred toward my husband reaches the limit of love of Jesus in me, the hatred does not go away but continues to linger. I am a sinner.

After her initial rejection, Okja gradually accepted herself as a sinner with an understanding that all others are also sinners. Okja's self-awareness as a sinner is the result of her lifelong indoctrination by the church as she refers the Bible to be the source. Lifelong indoctrination has an powerful effect on her. Okja has learned to see herself as a sinner, being fearful that "just a thought of sinning" is a sin. Okja's current existential situation where she cannot help but hating her abusive husband, further convinces herself as a sinner. Okja did not start as a sinner, but now she is convinced herself to be the sinner, based on the concrete substance of her hatred. The following passages show a different route to acquire sinner consciousness.

Eunhae: I began my confession when a pastor stepped into the pulpit. I envisioned my life flashed in front of my closed eyes as in the movie screen where it showed that I entered someone's house at the age of 7, saw the yellow cucumber flower, picked the cucumber, and placed it in a black skirt. The scene was played out in full color when there were very few black and white televisions, let alone a color television. I could not remember the scene, but I recalled later that it was a revenge for the kid who came and took our cucumber earlier. The next scene showed that I was lying to my mother by blaming my action onto my younger sister. I could not help but confess and cry when all the sins I have committed and forgotten played out before me. I did not realized that I have sinned so much but God showed me an

incident in which I picked a radish from someone's field during the war. God lives. Who else can show all those sins to me?⁶

Hanna: I did not get into the college that I wanted. I was devastated and lost. During this time, I found God from a college Bible reading group called UBF. I went to one of its retreats and God showed me that I was a sinner. While in prayer for two and a half hours, God showed me all my sins. After the tearful prayer of repentance, I saw a vision of a man atop the high ladder, wearing white robe and blessing me with both of his arms raised. I felt that he was Jesus. That experience convinced me that there is God.

Both women shared several commonness. First, it was through their conversion experiences that Eunhae and Hanna came to know themselves as the sinners. The conversion to Christianity required these women to see themselves as the sinners. This kind of conversion experience is not confined to the specific gender. For example, my brother in Korea had a similar conversion experience where God showed all sins he had committed onto a flashed movie screen in front of his eyes. For Korean Christians, having a sinner identity seems to be a prerequisite to becoming a Christian. I wonder how Western feminist Christians would respond to this phenomenon.

Feminist theologians in Chapter Three try to refute the dominant, negative image of human beings as sinners and re-envision it favorably as God's beloved, God's partners, free and responsible agents, or even virtual saviors. The criticality of knowing themselves as sinners in Korean conversion stories challenge the Western, feminist theologians' disapproval of humanity's condition as sinners. Maybe, those feminists can talk away the importance of sinner identity as a mere cultural phenomenon. But the problem is Eunhae and Hanna claim the divine origin of their experiences, where both

⁶ Shalom Korean Presbyterian Church, *Shalom Brochure*, printed for evangelism (Fairfax, VA, 2011), 3-4.

made it clear that it was God who "showed" their sins. Revelatory images of their sins came directly from God.

Secondly, both conversion stories show the extreme sensitivities to sin. Eunhae confessed "all the sins [she] had committed and forgotten." God even showed her picking "a radish from someone's field during the war" as one of her sins. As such, God showed Eunhae a complete and exhaustive list of sins. Hanna did not elaborate exactly which sins God showed her, but she said God's revelation of her sins lasted for "two and a half hours." Considering such a duration and her statement, "God showed all of my sins," the sins God revealed to her must have been complete and exhaustive as Eunhae's. Extreme sensitivities to sin seen in these two women's conversion stories resonate with the often used phrase by the other women, "all kinds of sins that are known and unknown to us."

Thirdly, in both stories, a change in self-image resulted in a change in God image. With the revelatory images from God, two women's self images have changed permanently. They began to see themselves as the sinners. For each women, the change in perceiving herself as a sinner was followed by a change in seeing God as "God," confessing that "God is real" or "there is God." Dykstra's idea of revelation could partially explain these changes regarding self and God images as resulting from the transformation of "the shape of [their] imagination" itself, which affects the entire areas of one's life.⁷ It could be said that a change in the shape of self-image affects the women's way of seeing God. Could the changes be explained in terms of the correlation

⁷ Dykstra, 79-80.

between the change in one's perception of self and that of God image, as argued by Maria Rizzuto?⁸

John Calvin, a Reformed theologian, stresses the interrelation between "the knowledge of God and that of ourselves."⁹ In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin asserts,

we cannot seriously aspire to [God] before we begin to become displeased with ourselves...The knowledge of ourselves not only arouse us to seek God, but also, as it were, leads us by the hand to find [God].¹⁰

Calvin's reasoning is similar to Rizzuto's idea of "psychic usefulness."¹¹ An image of self as miserable sinner must be compensated by an image of God who can offset that negative self image. But in the case of Hanna, an image of God was given in a "vision of a man atop the high ladder... blessing [her] with both of his arms raised." Hanna's image of God who blesses a sinner was given by God. Her new God image cannot be explained by Rizzuto's idea of psychic usefulness which requires significant time lag between the change of self image and the corresponding change in God image. Hanna's conversion stories challenge the feminist theologian's refusal to recognize the human status as the sinners who need the Savior.¹²

⁸ Rizzuto, 52,78,196, 200, 209.

⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, v. 20 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 35.

¹⁰ Calvin, 37.

¹¹ Rizzuto, 179.

¹² Whether revelation is a function of intrapsychic process or something that is extraneously given, or a combination of both is debatable and beyond this research.

Men's Sin vs. Women's Sin?

Carol Hess raised a concern about the "male-biased" theologies of sin, in particular, Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of sin as pride, which obstructs women's healthy development.¹³ Susan Nelson argues for the "situation-appropriate" categories of sin,¹⁴ distinguishing the sins of oppressors, often named as "pride or control," from the sins of "victims of others' sins."¹⁵ The women in the study framed their sins in terms of the "male-biased" understandings of sin as pride, as the following statements demonstrate.

Soonhee: Far left picture is the way I looked before accepting Jesus Christ. Back then, I was self-centered, full of worldly greed, arrogance, and desire for worldly pleasures. All of these snared me into a destruction and became the rod that punished me. The center picture is me repenting tearfully before the cross. It is the scene where I was in tear realizing how sinful I was before meeting Jesus. Far right picture shows my current state where I fly back and forth between Korea and America living a Christ centered life. I wanted to draw a scene of me in the Bible study but could not.¹⁶

Rose: Forgive us for the moment we have forgotten you. Forgive us with your compassion, for we are continuing to live like the children who are selfish and do not care for others although we should have grown in Christ.¹⁷

Kisook: If I try to control my life, then I am finished. Likewise, I can make peace in my family only if I suppress my selfhood, participating in Christ' suffering on the cross. For example, if a child asks for something and I reply simply "no" to assert my opinion, then it usually results in a negative outcome... I make decisions too quickly and I am very clear about what I want. But those tendencies are dangerous. I had many conflicts with my husband because of my hasty tendency. If God did not change that tendency, neither I nor my family would be here.

¹³ Hess., 50, 53.

¹⁴ Nelson, 42.

¹⁵ Ibid., 43.

¹⁶ This quote is part of our faith drawing activity during the third workshop where the participants were asked to draw a scene which represents their lives and then to explain the drawing by using the words "I" and "God." For Soonhee's drawing, see Appendix A.

¹⁷ See Appendix A for Rose's faith drawing.

Each paragraph comes from a different context, such as faith-drawing activity, public prayer, or interview. Soonhee and Rose list selfishness, "self-centeredness," "greed," "arrogance," and "desire for worldly pleasures" as the sins. Kisook's biggest struggle is not to put her own opinion over her husband's or her child's. She thinks that it is God's will for her to follow "Christ's suffering on the cross." Accordingly, Kisook frames her struggle in terms of the sin as pride since "pride" can be interpreted as "putting one's own self above God and others."¹⁸

Both Kisook and Rose view self-regard as the opposite to other-regard. Kisook had to "suppress" her own opinions and desires in order to listen to her husband and grown-up child. Similarly, Rose pits her own interests against those of the others by identifying "not caring for others" as a "selfish" act. Soonhee sums up her past as self-centeredness and envisions her ideal future as studying the Bible. For Korean women, the Bible represents God's will. Soonhee sets her past life of self-centeredness against a life of following God's will which was revealed in the Bible. Consequently, Soonhee sees self-regard as the opposite of God-regard. Carol Gilligan puts women's ethical dilemma in terms of the conflicts between care for self and others.¹⁹ It is intriguing to see the women in the research framing their religious struggles of not sinning in terms of the conflict between the caring for *self* and *others*, or the conflict between following one's own will and God's[Other's] will.

In all three statements, "Jesus," "Christ," or "the Cross" is mentioned. Kisook connects her suppression of selfhood to "participating in Christ's suffering on the cross."

¹⁸ Stalcup, 123.

¹⁹ Gilligan, 105, 70-71.

Although not as explicit as Kisook, Soonhee and Rose imply that Christ's sacrificial life for others is the criterion to judge their life of "self-centeredness" or their "not caring for others" as sinful. In the previous section titled, "Being stuck: Following way of the cross," I argued Jesus' sacrifice ideologically supports the women's sacrifice. Similarly, Jesus' sacrifice seems to affect the women's way of perceiving sin.

Who Is God? Korean Women's Dominant God Images

God the Father

When asked to pray at a workshop session, Joohee called out "Father" and "Father God" seventeen times during her one minute prayer. This nonsensical repetition of "Father" is symptomatic of Korean women's preoccupation and absolute dependence on God "the Father." I will illustrate the current reality of Korean women where they have no other name for God than "Father."

No Other Name But "Father"

The following discussion is from the fifth workshop where the male-dominated Christian symbol system was questioned. There are three issues requiring explanation, which are ignorance, denial, and difference.

1) Ignorance: Not Understanding That "Father God" Is Just a Symbol

Na: How distant do we feel from God who is seen as a dominant male and as a punisher of our sins? How are you connecting to such a mannish God?

Kumhee: I have not thought of God as a man or a woman specifically and have not approached God that way. I only thought of God as the one who provides for my need and helps me when I need help. I am always thankful for God who is loving. But I have never felt unfair about God's treating men or women differently.

Na: I am not saying that God treats women unfairly. It is the Christian symbol system that makes people identify God that way.... What feminist theologians are saying is that God is Spirit and does not have a gender, but because we refer God as a man, it establishes and sustains a system of ideologies that oppresses women. It is not an issue of whether God is a man or a woman.

Hanna: Feminist theologians can argue anything. They are academics. But from our perspective, it is confusing. (all laugh) I am confused why these people are trying to rebel against expressing God as "Father God."

2) Denial: "Never Thought of God as a Man"

Na: Has anyone thought of God as a man?

Hanna: I have not thought of God as a man or a woman. Rather, I thought of God as the one who is powerful. I have never thought of God in any gender.

Kumhee: I think of God as a man because when one thinks of power, we think of men.

Hanna: Still, I thought of God as the almighty being rather than as a man or a woman. I have not thought of God as a man. We refer God as a man because we call God the father. We refer God the father because fathers have the power to take care of the family and embrace the whole family. The role of a father is not limited to gender.

Soonhee: God is often referred to as "father." Since we are used to the titles such as King, King Jesus, Jesus as the Son of God, which are all male titles, we never thought of God as a woman. God is not distinguishable with gender, but since we have used all male titles in our language, we automatically imagine God as the man with power and might.

Na: That is precisely the problem. There is no possibility of God being a woman in your thought.

Hanna: No possibility (decisively).

3) Denial or Difference? Father God Does Not Bother Me!

Na: That is what feminist theologians are saying. If the creator of universe, whether it is God or Jesus, is only referenced by men, then there are no possibility of women to become the leaders in the church.

Hanna: It probably affects that.

Na: The effects are serious... So, you are sure that your relationship with God has not been affected negatively when you refer to God as "father"?

Soonhee: It did not bother me. I would never think "Father God" as a hindrance, for bothering means that it is negatively affecting our faith. No need to think otherwise. It is obvious to me that the "Father God" automatically refers to love, mighty, and fearful being.

The first issue is women's initial failure to distinguish a symbol of God from God. When I first raised an issue of the dominant male image of God, Kumhee tried hastily to defend God by saying, "I have never felt unfair about *God's* treating men or women differently." Kumhee's phrase, "God's treating," discloses her confusion between God and a symbol of God. In response, I clarified that I was talking about a symbol system, not about God per se. Hanna's phrase, "to rebel against expressing God as 'Father God'," makes it questionable if she really understood the difference between the symbol of God and God since we do not "rebel" against "an expression," but against a person with authority.

Kumhee's defense and Hanna's confusion can be understood as part of the struggle involving what James Fowler calls "demythologization." Fowler explains.

Symbols of the sacred...are related to in ways which honor them as inseparably connected to the sacred. Therefore, worthy symbols are themselves sacred. They *are* depths of meaning. Any strategy of demythologization, therefore, threatens the participation of symbol and symbolized and is taken, consequently, as an assault on the sacred itself.²⁰

Fowler continues to argue, "when persons' symbols have undergone trivialization," "the sacred itself is emptied," and this "emptying of the sacred" can cause "rampant anxiety" and even "neuroses."²¹ From this perspective, my challenge to the symbol of "Father" can be perceived as a direct assault on God.

²⁰ Fowler, *Stage of Faith*, 163. According to Fowler, demythologization occurs during the transition from Fowler's stage three, "synthetic-conventional faith," to the stage four, "individuative-reflective faith." Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 163-64.

The idea of demythologization is helpful in understanding the second issue, that is, Hanna's stubborn refusal to admit that she perceives God as male. In the discussion, Kumhee said, "I have not thought of God as a man or a woman specifically..." and I would not call it a denial or a rejection. Kumhee sounds authentic, given the fact that "God the Father" is taken for granted by most Korean women. But Hanna's repeated contention that she has "never thought of God in any gender" but as the "almighty being" is hard to accept at face value. Unlike Hanna, Kumhee and Soonhee admitted the "power" or "might" is indicative of God's maleness.²² By admitting that she cannot think of "God being a woman," Hanna indirectly recognized God in the gendered term, specifically as a male. Her strong refusal to recognize God's maleness can be seen as an unconscious effort to keep her God image, which she is confused with the real God.

The third issue is about the women's denial that the male symbols of God can affect women's lives negatively. Kumhee said, "I am always thankful and consider God as loving and never felt unfair..." Kumhee's affirming response to God despite its perceived maleness coincides with Jane McAvoy's observation that

not all [ethnic] groups consider the fatherhood of God to be the central problem or concern of Christian belief and worship.²³

Kumhee's affirmation communicates Korean women's *difference* in experiencing God the Father. However, the interpretation from the group difference loses its credibility when

²² Ursula King a feminist theologian, citing Rosemary Ruether's work, states that what causes "sexist attitudes" is "not the maleness of God" but its "association with our patriarchal models of maleness as dominance and of femaleness as subjugation." [Ursula King, *Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise*, 2nd ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1993), 170.

²³ Jane McAvoy, "God with Us: From Language to Liturgy," in *Setting the Table Women: in Theological Conversation*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brook, Claudia Camp, and Serene Jones (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 100.

Soonhee said that the "Father God" does not "affect her negatively while referring him as "love, mighty, and *fearful being*." Should not a "fearful" God affect her negatively? Is Soonhee making a similar denial as Hanna? Or, should it be understood as a matter of difference? Korean women's relationship with God the Father is unique and more complex than Western feminists would suggest.

Analysis of God Image Survey

God image survey was conducted between third and fourth week of the workshop as an assignment by using Maria Rizzuto's interview format, which is in "Appendix" of her book *The Birth of the Living God*.²⁴ In addition, I asked the participants to draw an image of God that comes to their minds with short descriptions.²⁵ All women in the workshop participated in the survey. The following is the summary of my analysis.²⁶

*A summary of the God image survey

1. All nine women perceive their relationship to God as the father-child relationship. Most of them referred to God as "Father." All referred to themselves as a "child" or a "daughter" of God. A few women additionally referred to God as a "friend" or a "talking buddy."
2. While calling God exclusively "Father God," the women's sources of God representation are not limited to their fathers, but it is influenced by various primary-caretaking figures such as mother, father, and/or brother. The feminine portraits of God by the women seem to originate from their mothers, which

²⁴ Rizzuto, 213-19. Rizzuto's interview form consists of two parts, "'God' questionnaire" and "'family' questionnaire."

²⁵ For women's God image drawings, see Appendix A.

²⁶ The analysis of the survey is limited in two ways. First, Rizzuto's questionnaires are not designed for a written survey but for in-depth, clinical interviews. The difficulty in applying Rizzuto's questionnaires to my research respondents is that the answers were short and some were in blanks from the written survey assignment. Moreover, because I am not a trained psychiatrist, I can only offer rudimentary analysis.

becomes visible in the "sources of God representation" chart that follows this summary.

3. The women perceive God as the father who loves, protects, provides, and blesses them as long as they obey and, otherwise, God will punish them. Obedience is generally understood as following God's will rather than their own or worldly desires and interests. The obedience for the women applies to three specific things, which are reading the word of God, praying, and evangelizing.

4. The women perceive God as the "Father" who is "considerate," "sensitive," "kind," "responsive," "caring," "patient," "forgiving," while simultaneously fearing God as the one who will bring wrath if they do not obey. The feminine images of God often overlap with the women's descriptions of their mothers. Minjoo's and Soonhee's fearful and punishing God images coincide with the descriptions of their fathers. The other women did not write much about their fathers. As a result, the father's influence on their God image formations is indeterminate.

5. The women believe that divine wrath can be expressed by natural disasters such as an earth quake or by God's action of "taking away something that matter to them" such as their loved ones, health, and wealth. The reasons for such punishments are to teach them a "lesson" or "wisdom," to make them "humble" so as to "live faithfully," to use them for a good cause in the future, or "to make them come back to God when they go astray." The women view God's punishment as an expression of God's parental love for them.

* Source of Soonhee's God presentation

God	Mother
"God is <i>meek</i> and <i>loving</i> us"	"My mother was <i>meek</i> and full of <i>love</i> ."
"God <i>always listens to me</i> and <i>responds to my prayers without failure</i> "	"My mother <i>always listened to me</i> and embraced me." "My mother loved me and <i>took care of me for every details</i> "
God	Father
"God will <i>punish</i> me if I am not with him." "If I am of weak faith, I becomes <i>anxious and fearful of God</i> ."	"My father <i>strictly controlled</i> us and I could <i>not feel relaxed and comfortable</i> with him."
"My trust in God who is always with us is important since he is <i>almighty</i> "	"My father led our family and he was

God."	<i>powerful and mighty for us."</i>
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* Sources of Hanna's God representation²⁷

God	Old Brother
"God <i>knew</i> my problem." "God understands my hurts." "God <i>knows</i> and <i>takes care of</i> my difficult situations."	"I remember my brother as firm and kind ...he still <i>knows</i> and gets <i>involved in</i> the welfare of his nephews." "My brother <i>took care of</i> family matters." "My brother <i>helped</i> in many ways for my future."
God	Parents
"God does <i>not force</i> us to come back but <i>waits patiently</i> ." "God <i>waits</i> for a thousand year as a day for his children."	"My parents chose love over the rod as they <i>patiently waited</i> for the children to become good persons."

*Sources of Minjoo's God Representation

God	Mother
"God is the one who <i>support me from behind</i> ." "God is always <i>watching over me</i> ." "God always <i>looks after me</i> ." "God has love and <i>patience</i> ."	"My mom is always <i>next to me</i> and shows <i>intense interests</i> in everything about me" "I feel <i>at ease and relaxed</i> with my mother since my mom <i>knows everything about me</i> ." "Mother <i>patiently</i> prays for me."

²⁷ The age difference between Hanna and her older brother is about ten years. Hanna's older brother was her primary caretaker because of her father's old age. Hanna did not recall much of her father's influence on her from childhood. Instead, she said, "my father just existed. My older brother did all the work my father was supposed to do." In Korea, this practice of an older child taking care of younger siblings are common.

God	Father
"If I live a life without God, then God will <i>punish</i> me and <i>forcefully bring me back</i> to the Lord."	"Father is <i>absolute authority</i> " "Father does what he set his mind on. There are <i>nothing he cannot do if he decide to do it.</i> "

From the analysis, two observations stand out. First, all women's God images belong to the "latency" period in psychoanalytic terms in that they envision their relationship to God primarily as a child-parent relationship and God is seen as the "powerful" "protector" and "the Almighty."²⁸ This poses a problem since God image proposed by Rizzuto is basically an individual, idiosyncratic phenomenon. Consequently, I am left with a dilemma of explaining this homogeneous God image among the Korean women. Is the father God image a culture specific, Korean phenomena? Moreover, the God image according to Rizzuto must be "updated"²⁹ throughout the individual's entire lifespan in order not to lose its "psychic usefulness."³⁰ As such, it is hard to explain how the women's collective God image can belong to only one specific phase, the latency period. Should this be interpreted as a phenomenon of collective developmental lag? Or, should it be seen as an evidence that Rizzuto's theory fails to explain the Korean women's God images where I have already expressed my doubt about the applicability of her theory to Korean women in Chapter Two?

²⁸ Rizzuto, 207.

²⁹ Ibid., 209.

³⁰ Ibid., 179.

The second observation is that all women describe God as a father with traditionally feminine adjectives such as "considerate," "sensitive," "kind," "responsive," "caring," "patient," and "forgiving." In the Appendix section, there are God-image drawings by Minjoo and Insook where they illustrate God in embracing or hugging posture with two extended arms. For Korean people, especially the elderly, fathers rarely embrace their adult-children. Accordingly, God in the drawings is more likely to be a mother figure. Minjoo's God image with caring attributes seems to originate mostly from her mother as seen in the above chart. Insook completed only half of the God questionnaire omitting the family information, therefore making it difficult to find the family origin of her God image. However, I have found another source, prodigal daughter exercise, from which to analyze her family origin of God's image.

Then, I imagine myself coming back home after realizing that I was wrong and believing my mother would take me back while my father would never accept me again. My mother, despite her heartache, would hide me from my father after my return because he would probably beat me badly. In the same way, our father God would make our sin as white as snow, no matter how red it was. I see the similarity between my mother's heart and father God's heart. My earthly father would never take me back unless my mother in time convinces my father to do so.

Accordingly, Insook's mother, rather than her father, is the likely source of the image of God with "embracing" and "welcoming" arms in her drawing.³¹ The survey shows the women's dominant image of God is the father who has feminine attributes. These feminine attributes, as seen in Minjoo and Insook, seem to originate from their mothers.

³¹ This interpretation assumes that Insook's God representation is in "direct and undisguised continuation of the parental representation." Rizzuto, 94. Without much familial information, this interpretation is still indeterminate. For instance, Insook's embracing image of God can also be seen as originating from her wished-for father, whose characteristics are opposite to her real father.

This finding is intriguing when it is juxtaposed with the women's utter rejection of God in female gender.

Western feminists warned about the negative effects of "exclusive" use of "the image of God the father"³² and advocated to relativize "the absolutised symbol of the fatherhood of God."³³ Part of feminist concern for all male images of God is women's emotional alienation. Stalcup argues,

the significance of religious symbols and images has been much explored in the work of feminists, particularly as it relates to women's need for those to be more woman-identified in order to be meaningful, to touch the heart and grab the mind, to stimulate feeling and motivate action.³⁴

However, despite this concern, the women in the research are coping well with the father God image, as is the case of Yonghee. In the interview, Yonghee responded to a question, "what is God to you?"

God is my father. When I begin my prayer by calling out, "my father, father," I get emotional. Whenever I am down, I imagine God the Father and cry out to him. This restores the ferventness of prayer... My father passed away when I was very young. Perhaps, that is why I had much longing for my father. I have heard from my mother that he was a good man, but I did not have a direct loving relationship with my father.³⁵

Yonghee feels intimate and close to God the Father. Just calling out God's name, "Father," revitalizes her ferventness toward God. The research shows that Korean women are not just coping but also thriving with their Father God.

³² King, 169.

³³ Ibid., 170.

³⁴ Stalcup, 127.

³⁵ According to Rizzuto's theory, it is not just "the parents of real life but the wished-for parents" who contribute to the God image. Rizzuto, 44. Yonghee's father God image can be read in connection with her wished-for father.

A God Who Knows Our *Shimjung* [Heart]

The women in the study demonstrate their emotional closeness to God the Father.

The following illustrate the women's deep sense of intimacy with God.

Soonhee: I come before God with a barren and heavy heart that needs to be unloaded. I wish God notice my desperation, my weakness, and my desire to get help. A human being does not understand even one percent of how I feel and how desperate I am. However, God knows my *shimjung*, what I feel and what I need, even before I pray. God begins pouring out God's grace and makes me cry. (tears) No one understands such an intimate feeling of God's grace working in me.

Hanna: I have been whispering, "Father," in the prayer for my problem for several days. On one day, God showed me the clear answer to my prayer and my problem. I realized that even the whisper of "Father" is understood by God as my prayer, and solves my problem. There are many times when I don't specifically speak out the details of my prayer, but a mere whispering of "Father" is enough for God to know what I need and to answer me.

Jangmi: I looked up at the sky and whispered, "God, my life is so hard. I am so lonely even with my husband around." I don't complain to my husband, nor I ask my son for money although we have too many empty rooms for rent, which is our only source of income. I seldom cry in front of my husband or son. But when I whimpered, "God, please help me," tears rolled. I opened my heart to God. I took a walk around our neighborhood, praising God with hymns and crying, and came back home. But my husband and son did not know that I cried because I looked happy by the time I arrived home.

From the women's accounts, their relationships with God are described in terms of God's exhaustive and intimate knowledge about them. God knows their "desperation," "weakness," "desire," and "problems." God's knowledge about the women is so perceptive that God knows by "a mere whispering of 'Father'" or "even before" their prayers. This kind of mind-reading ability is expected in Korean culture specific *Shimjung* relationships where people know one another by heart to heart connections. According to Simone Kim, Korean *shimjung* exchange is a gendered experience, often

occurring between the people "of the same gender."³⁶ However, the women in my study show the active *shimjung* exchanges with God who is perceived as the opposite gender.

Korean women's *shimjung* exchanges with God are exhaustive in a sense that God knows not just what women need but how they *feel*. For Jangmi, God becomes an outlet to release her suppressed feelings. God, instead of her husband or sons, is the one to whom Jangmi can express her true emotions. Such an exclusive relationship with God is also seen in Soonhee who said, "human beings do not understand even one percent" of what God knows of her. The Father God does not alienate Korean women's emotional life from God. Rather, Korean women are getting help from the Father God in coping with emotional ups and downs by the active *shimjung* exchanges with God.

In Chapter Three, seven feminist theologians stressed the mutuality or mutual power relation between God and humanity. These seven feminists thought the mutuality of power as a prerequisite for genuine, divine-human intimacy. Based on similar logic, they thought that the human condition as the sinner which puts humanity *in need of* salvation, hampers the authentic mutuality and intimacy between God and humanity. In following sections titled, "A God of paradox" and "A God who punishes," I examine how Korean women maintain their sense of intimacy with God despite the obstacles of divine-human power differential and human status as the sinner.

A God of Paradox

The Western feminist theologians I examined perceive the relationship between God's power and human power as a zero-sum relationship where the two negatively

³⁶ Simone Kim, "Han and Relationality," 76.

correlate. The more power God has, the less power human beings have, and vice versa. However, unlike the Western feminists' assertion, the women in my study experience God's power as most empowering to them when they are least powerful. This paradoxical power dynamic is noticeable in the following.

Soonhee: I have been questioning why I am not plentiful. As I cry out to God with my hands lifted up, I realize that I may not have plenty by worldly standards, but the value of the spiritual blessings God gives when I cry out to God cannot be compared to any money. Although I do not have much, God provides when I ask according to my need. I come before God with less of physical things, but afterward I return with plenty. God gives all that I need when I come with a weak and meek heart and ask. Since God is my father who has everything, he can and will provide. If we have not received, then we must not have asked.

Hanna: When we cry out to Lord at the end of the road, God holds us with firmer hands. When my second child was 14 months old, he bit off his tongue. The doctors said his tongue may not grow back, and there is nothing more doctors can do for him. For two weeks, everyone from the church and our family fell on the floor and prayed because there is nothing that we can do other than relying on "Father." After awhile, the tongue grew back, and he became the best talker among my three children. When there is nothing that we can do, we can only hold on to our Lord.

Heejung: God is the guidepost for my life, which protects me from going astray, shows me the right way, and gives me an alternative pathway if I am not able to handle a situation. I live with God's power. Without it, I cannot live a moment. I like the Bible verse that says, "I can do all things with God who gives me strength." God also gives alternative ways if I am not able to handle... There were many times when just as I was about to give up, God provided the way out... My mother-in-law passed away at the age of 92 after suffering from dementia for a long time. I was able to handle such a difficult time of nursing her because God provided an alternative escape route to handle the dementia. Whenever she wrecked havoc in the family, I went to church at dawn to pray. Afterwards, I could love her again. My dawn prayer continued for 4 years.

There are certain common patterns by which God's power works in these women. First, the women face limit situations, such as destitution, son's injury, or mother-in-law's dementia, where they find themselves completely powerless. Soonhee "lifted up" her hands before God, a gesture of complete surrender. Hanna was "at the end of road" where "there is nothing that [she] can do." Heejung "wanted to throw up both of [her]

arms and "was about to give up." Second, instead of giving up, however, these women "cried out" to God, firmly "holding on to" God as the last resort. During this suffering and waiting period, prayer was critical. The women did not wait idly but devoted themselves to fervent prayers without stopping. Heejung recollected "a time when [she] drove to church without any fear during the blizzard and got lost on the way back home" in order not to miss a dawn prayer meeting. Similarly, Hanna "often slept in the church floor praising and crying because [she] had no other way to solve" her problems. Third, God answers their prayers and solved their problems. God did not respond to their prayers with mere adequate things, but with the best things. Soonhee, after a prayer, "returns with plenty." Hanna's injured son now is "the best talker." Heejung was able not just to deal with the dementia but to "love" her mother-in-law anew every day.

Unlike the Western feminists I studied, these women are not afraid of divesting their own humanly power before God, knowing that God's power works most strongly *for* them when they are completely powerless. Soonhee felt God's strongest hands when she was "weak and helpless." God held Hanna "with firmer hands" when she was in trouble. Since these women do not see God's power as in an antagonistic but cooperative, helping relationship to them, God's power works paradoxically for them. The women in the study experience God's power not as enervating but as empowering. Most women identify God with power and strength as illustrated by the following.

Minjoo: God is my power. When I think of God, it comforts me. Whenever I am faced with hardship, I think of God. Then, all becomes calm, for everything will work out for good according to God's will and all things will eventually pass away. Therefore, God to me is the one who provides calmness and power to overcome any hardships.

Jangmi: I worked in a deli store and later at the cleaning company. I was an art major in college, but here I had to learn to give up my major and endure all kinds of menial work. I was well off in Korea and grew up having a vague American

Dream. But, in reality, the immigrant life is hard and has lots of difficulties... Every time I expected things from people, I got hurt and disappointed, but if I gaze upon the Lord, I get a peace in my mind. God listens to my moaning and gives me strength and peace when I come before God. I realize that my suffering is the result of not relying on God more.

Minjoo and Jangmi make the connection between human sufferings and God's power.

Their accounts help in looking closer at the connection. According to Minjoo, her trust in God is not just because God has the power to save her from the hardships, but the powerful God has a good will towards her, and at the end, "everything will work out for good according to God's will." Jangmi's account illuminates Korean immigrant woman's isolation from her surroundings where people around her only gave pains and disappointments. For her, God's power is the only resource for living an unfavorable, lonely immigrant life. I wonder how many Korean women feel this way as most immigrants left behind their loved ones in Korea and often do not have a human network to support them in difficult times. Minjoo and Jangmi connect God to their emotional wellbeing by viewing God as the one who gives them "calmness," "peace," and "comfort." These emotional impacts cannot be achieved with a powerless God, no matter how determined and understanding that God is. This is why I believe that the God of process theology, "the fellow sufferer who understands," is not enough for Korean women.³⁷ A God of *shimjung* must be the powerful God as well. God's power is rarely a problem for Korean women. God's power is for their own benefits. The more power God has, the more benefits they will get. Their real problem is not "relying on God [and God's power] more," according to Jangmi.

³⁷ Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), 14.

A God Who Punishes

Korean women seem to prosper in their relationships with God the Father despite the perceived power differential between them. Could the women still prosper in their relationships with God who punishes?

Rose: There are things that I do although God is not pleased. I get scared when I commit sins that I am not supposed to. If I sin and do not confess, the Bible says God will punish up to the next three generations. I am most fearful that God will punish me by taking away my precious things or hurting the people I care the most, that is, my children.

Soonhee: I am always fearful of God, wondering whether I am sinning by my every little action. I fear God as much as I love God. God has both blessing and punishment.

Rose and Soonhee show the great fear toward God who punishes. Rose pictures God who is extremely vengeful punishing our sins "up to the next three generations."

Soonhee with her fear-driven mentality keeps "thinking whether she is sinning." Their fears are disturbing but congruent with the women's acute sense of sin and guilt, which was discussed in the section titled, "I am Sinner." Their sinner consciousness goes hand in hand with their fear of God who punishes. The following paragraphs are from the sixth workshop, which uncover more of the women's underlying dynamics with God who punishes.

Big Punishment or Small Punishment

Okja: I think there are two types of punishment from God. The first type is to scare us when we worship other gods, and the second type of punishment is to make us better through the experience and to bless us as God's expression of love.

Soonhee: God chose us to be God's children because God loves us. But, if the children worship other gods, then God will punish us with the loving rod. If we disobey God's will, we should expect the punishment. Otherwise, we will do whatever we want to do according to our corrupt will.

Hanna: When the Israelites refused God and turned away from God to worship other gods, God punished them to return. God hates most when we shun away from God and worship other gods.

Insook: There are big punishments and small punishments. The small punishments are the hardships we encounter in our lives by which God punishes us based on God's love with the purpose to strengthen our faith and to make us bear good fruits. Big punishments are about death, destruction, and natural disasters. If one doesn't want to have God in one's life, say, by worshipping other gods, which is a big sin, then it brings about a big punishment like death. Since most of us here do not reject God, God will only give us small punishments, which we can endure for the sake of our maturing faith.

Soonhee: It is God's choice to determine whether to punish us in big or small ways. But one thing is for sure that there will be punishment because God loves us.

Joohee: We fear punishment whether it is big or small. God should not be God of love only.

From the discussion, there are several clues as to how Korean women cope with the fearful God who punishes. First, the women do not question the fact that "the children of God" should be punished for their sins by their Father God. As discussed in the section titled, "I am Your Child," being a child of God means both privilege and responsibility. If the women want to claim privilege, then they must accept responsibility as well. In disobeying God, the children of God "should expect God's punishment." Therefore, the women's first coping strategy is to unquestioningly accept the punishment as part of being God's children.

Second, in connection with the privilege and responsibility, God's punishment is understood ultimately as an expression of God's love, to "make us better," to prevent us from doing "whatever we want to according to our corrupt will," to make us "return" to God, to "strengthen our faith," or to make us "bear good fruits." I wonder how much of such reasoning about God's punishment reflects the indoctrination by the church. It

seems the women's pattern of reasoning coincides with the Calvinistic teaching. Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* argues,

the final outcome would show that God always has the best reason for his plan: either to instruct his own people in patience, or to correct their wicked affections and the tame their lust, or to subjugate them to self-denial, or to arose them from sluggishness; again, to bring law the proud, or shatter the cunning of the impious and to overthrow their devices.³⁸

The trust in God's best plan for us often motivates the women to endure long-term hardships with perseverance, as Hanna testifies.

I often realize that God puts me through a trial to reward me with something good after the situation gets resolved. There was a situation that I went through for 4 years with tearful prayers... But after 4 years, all the problems were cleared away.

Hanna's interpretation for her trial reflects the Calvinistic influence with an emphasis on trusting or respecting God's "secret judgment" or God's "will," which is "the truly just cause of all things."³⁹ Hanna patiently waited for four years until God's secret plan to "reward her with something good" was finally revealed to her. Consequently, the women's second coping strategy is to trust the ultimate goodness in God's punishments.

Third strategy is hinted by the distinction made between "big punishments" and "small punishments" by the women. The big punishments mean the "death and destruction" as a result of committing the perishable sin of idolatry. Insook thinks that Christians, for the sake of "not rejecting God," are immune to fatal punishments. She says, God "will only give us[Christians] small punishments." I noticed Insook using the expression "big punishments" to describe an idea similar to radical suffering. But her idea of big punishments lacks the underlying connotation of the word "radical suffering,"

³⁸ Calvin, *Institutes*, 211.

³⁹ Ibid.

which refers to "irredeemably unjust" suffering.⁴⁰ Rather, she justifies big punishment and big suffering as the result of idolatry. She even includes natural disaster as part of God's big punishment, which concerns me. I decide to challenge the women about the causal connection between sin and punishment.

It could be a problem to say that God punishes because of our sin. How could we explain tragedies such as the Holocaust, the famine in Africa, and the tsunami destruction in Japan, which devoured the thousands of non-Christians and Christians alike? Can we say that the people who lost their houses by the brush fire in California are because of their unconfessed sins? Making a direct correlation between human sin and God's punishment causes many problems. What do you all think?

In response, Soonhee said.

I do not believe we (Christians) can avoid the punishments because God loves us, the chosen people. Rather, because God loves the world and all who are in it, we all can be punished whether we are saved or not. But for the saved like us, we can endure all things because we lean on God for strength.

Soonhee changed her position by saying that all Christians and non-Christians alike are subject to God's punishment. Nonetheless, she did not give up the idea of God's punishment itself. Accordingly, radical sufferings are still understood as the results of human sins. I find this interpretation of suffering "as the punishment for sin" extremely hard to break.⁴¹ I brought up this issue again in the co-analysis session with Rose and Kumhee.

Na: Some Korean ministers say the Tsunami that hit the Japan is God's punishment for idol worship. Do you think the same way? Any problem with the statement?

Kumhee: In some ways, maybe that is true. Since they have excessive idols, God may punish them that way.

Rose: To wake them up.

⁴⁰ Farley, 22.

⁴¹ Ibid., 21.

Kumhee: Some may say those mega natural disasters are the results of our destroying the environment. But it seems that the environment change cannot explain all the unusual effects. There may be other forces working.

Rose: God is near, and the end of the world is near.

Na: Not all unbelievers are victimized. There are Christian victims as well.

Rose: God does not pick and choose who suffers and who does not.

Kumhee: Christians are not immune to those disasters, but at least they will go to heaven.

Rose: God will take care of those Christians. God probably has a separate plan for them.

Kumhee and Rose did not give in to my challenge. They maintained that the radical suffering which does not distinguish its victims is also the punishment of God. When challenged concerning indiscriminate deaths, Rose defended her position by God's "separate plan," which sounds much similar to Calvin's idea of divine, "secret plan" or "hidden will." According to Calvin,

God's wonderful method of governing the universe is rightly called an abyss, because while it is hidden from us, we ought reverently to adore it.⁴²

However, the God of Calvin is the One who cannot yield his power in an "arbitrary or capricious" manner. According to Case-Winter's exposition of Calvin's view of God,

God's personal will is the cause of all things and is not determined by anything outside itself. But God acts by virtue of an inner necessity, in accord with divine nature.⁴³

Therefore, God who punishes people indiscriminately and unjustly does not fit Calvin's characterization of God. Our discussion of the radical suffering remained unresolved but Kumhee disclosed another coping strategy.

⁴² Calvin, *Institutes*, 212-13.

⁴³ Case-Winter, 45. According to Case-Winter, a God of Calvin is morally "limited" or determined.

The true believers will be saved and go to heaven, and nonbelievers will go to hell for not believing the Lord. There are definitely two different paths to the end... If not, I would not believe in Jesus and live my life as I please.

"True believers" are guaranteed to enter heaven, no matter how harsh the trials or sufferings they may encounter on earth. Therefore, with the hope of glorious heaven, the women can overcome the dreadful fear of radical sufferings.

I have described four coping strategies in dealing with the fear of God's punishment. There are two more factors which help the women cope with the fearful image of God. The one is the dominant image of father God who knows our *shimjung*. This caring God offsets a negative impact of another equally dominant image of father God who punishes. The other factor is the women's dominant self image as "a daughter of God," which discloses their hidden expectations for God's favoritism. For example, as a "daughter" of God, the women expect to be exempted from God's punishment since they are his favored daughters. This identity as daughter seems to offset the women's fear. All these factors and strategies as a combined force help Korean women cope with the fearful God the Father who punishes.

A Living God

Whenever I used the phrase, "a living God," I used to see a questioning look on seminary professors and colleagues. Perhaps, "a living God" is a culture specific phenomenon. Korean women's experience with a living God in their daily lives, no matter how odd it may sound, throws a new light on our discussion about the mutuality and intimacy between God and Korean women. Eunhae, a workshop member in her eighties said, "if God is not with us weekly or hourly, we are in trouble." It is a testimony

of the life of dependence on God for every detail. The following accounts detail the women's dependence on God for their life needs and necessities.

Jangmi: God cares for life details and hears my moaning. My life is very hard... I often wanted to quit, but each time, I settled down to reality. If I quit, no one else is going to pay for our bills. But God never failed me to pay the bills. The living God gets involved in my detailed circumstance and resolves it. We may plan and try, but it is God who makes it happen. Therefore, I quickly pull back from trying to resolve the issues myself.

Kisook: Because my husband and I are not well versed in English, we could not help my son in his decision to go into military. But God intervened and took care of it. Every time we were faced with a difficult, unfamiliar situation about our son's path, God sent a helper through a customer of our business. An American named Mike, who had a Korean boss in the same field as my son's, took my son to his boss for an advice. We could not provide this kind of help to my son, but God let the others to help us, hundred percents.

Jangmi calls God "a living God." For Jangmi and Kisook, God is a living God who does not hesitate to "intervene" or to "get involved" in order to take care of them. God's manner of involvement is very personal and detailed. God cared for Jangmi's paying "the bills." God helped Kisook's son to decide about the military service and the career afterward. For both women, God's intervention resulted in better or perfect resolutions of the issues. Accordingly, Jangmi awaits for the resolution through God's way rather than hers. Kisook is "hundred percents" satisfied by the way God works. The women experienced God's intervention as indispensable in overcoming uncontrollable situations of immigrant life, taking care of financial situation or son's career. For the women, God is a living God who intervenes to resolve difficult life issues, often in unexpected ways.

Three Ways God Intervenes

The following stories detail three ways in which a living God interacts with the women.

1) A God Who Works *for* Us

Hanna: I hurt my back right after I came to America. I prayed for healing and got healed. I prayed for a green card, and I received it in 5 months. I prayed for my husband to join me in America, and he came. There were number of incidents where people asked for my prayers for their problems and got answered.

2) A God Who Works *on* Us

Heejung: God is working in my life. I told my husband not to work on one Sunday, but he went anyway. On his way to the shop, he got into an accident resulting in a huge auto repair bill, which was several times more than what he earned from the work. Since then, we never skip Sunday services for anything else. It is hard to deny God when God shows his specific lesson in my life.

3) A God Who Works *with* Us

Yonghee: We usually know what God's will is. If my daughter brings a man to marry, we already know what is God's will for her because we have been praying for a husband who is faithful and capable. We would then pray to God, if he is the one from God, help the marriage to be successful, otherwise, let them break apart. Therefore, I know whether it was God's will or not, by the result. Even if my daughter marries the man against God's will, I believe God will still help her to become a better person through her difficult marriage. Then, I will pray for her to be a better person. If things did not still work out, God will let me realize that I have to pray for different things, which I omitted in prayer due to my misjudgments. The pain is always caused by our misjudgments.

The first type is a way of God's intervention where a woman actively solicits an intervention from God for her behalf, and God intervenes in response. This type of intervention is often observed in Korean women like Hanna who fervently prays. Soonhee, another believer of enthusiastic prayer, says "God works in our daily lives as we pray and get answers from God." Jangmi's getting her bills paid and Kisook's getting help for her son are the results of their fervent prayers. Usually, these women are very persistent in what they ask from God. Once, Hanna prayed for a problem for four years often sleeping in the church floor and crying out to God.

This type of intervention sheds new light on the divine-human power dynamics. In Hanna's case, God is perceived as the One who has the power to solve her problem if

God wills. She seems powerless in a sense that her life is *dependent* on God's gracious daily intervention. There seems no mutuality of power between God and her. But, if we think of mutuality in RCT's terms as the "mutual impacts" where people "see, know, and feel that they have moved [others], that they have had an impact on [others]," it is a different story.⁴⁴ With her prayers answered by God, Hanna saw, knew, and felt that she moved God and had an impact on God. Accordingly, there exists the mutuality, not in terms of the equality of power but in terms of mutual impacts.

Second type shows a divine-human interaction that is different from Hanna's. In Hanna's case, there was two-way movements from Hanna to God and back to Hanna. But in Heejung, God intervenes without being asked in order to give her husband a "specific lesson." In such an interaction, there is no mutual impact. God unilaterally affects Heejung's husband. However, Heejung is still thankful for God's working in her life despite the unilateral control of God.

I distinguish Yonghee as a separate type from the other women. Similar to Hanna and Heejung, Yonghee believes in God's intervention in her life affairs. She hopes God to intervene to "break apart" the relationship if the man her daughter wants to marry is not "from God." However, Yonghee is open to a possibility that her daughter can act "against God's will." She also believes that, despite her daughter's disobedience, God will still help her daughter to become "a better person." This non-coercive manner of God's interaction is much different from the other Korean women's dominant image of God who punishes them for disobedience. Yonghee views "the pain" as the result of "our misjudgments," not as God's punishment. For Yonghee, God's intervention is not for

⁴⁴ Hartling, et al., "Shame and Humiliation," 124.

changing the course of an event for her daughter. Without force, God influenced Yonghee to "realize" that she needs to pray for "different things." Yonghee's view of God resembles the God of process theology who does not use the "coercive force but the lure of value and vision" or "a power of persuasion."⁴⁵ Rather than working *for* or *on* her, Yonghee's God works *with* her. Each woman perceives God's ways of working in their lives differently. A degree of mutual impact also differs greatly. Nonetheless, God is a living God who are intimately related to every detail of the women's lives.

Experiencing God through Voice, Visions, and Dreams

Some women in the study experience God by hearing God's voices or songs, seeing visions, or dreaming dreams. A living God the women experience is the *real* presence of God through the extraordinary means of communication. Their experiences can be categorized into three groups based on the types of communication.

1) Communicating with God through God's Voice and Songs

Jangmi: I often get answers from God during late night prayers and worships at the church. When I pray fervently, the songs come out of my mouth automatically. God answers through these songs. When I am in pain and feel desperate, God gives me a song "peace, peace," which makes me happy and joyous. If I am sorrowful, God will not give me a song about lovely God, but rather a song like, "God is so good."

Hanna: God gives me a hymn, usually while I pray. I have not thought of a particular song, but God suddenly gives it to me. Then, the same hymn or lyric lingers in my mind for awhile. Then, one day, the hymn changes to another one. Nowadays, God has given me a hymn, "Thanks to God." Last week, it was the "Since Christ My Soul From Sin Set Free."

Hanna: To me, the driving time is my revival time where I worship, pray, and pray in tongue. Sometime ago, I was very upset because my husband told me not to buy a house, which I had already looked and fell in love. He was the one who

⁴⁵ Case-Winter, 147.

told me to look for a house quickly. Yet, when I found one that I liked, he said to wait. On that Sunday while driving to the church, I prayed and God gave me the word, "do not be upset my beloved daughter but be firm in your faith." So, I thanked God for the words. In the next day, my husband called and told me to purchase the house.

Jangmi's and Hanna's communication with God has several commonalities. First, both women claim that it was God who gave songs and voices. Jangmi stressed that the "songs come out...automatically." Hanna said, "God suddenly gives [a song]" to her. Second, God's voice or song came in the context of worship and prayer. Third, God's communication is very specific. The women mentioned specific songs. Hanna recalled the precise wording of God's voice, "do not be upset..." The authenticity of that voice was confirmed by her husband's call to allow the purchase. Fourth, hearing God's specific words or receiving particular songs from God has a soothing effect on the women's pains and disturbed hearts.

2) Communicating with and Meeting God through the Dreams

Yonghee: God showed me a pet store business in my dream. We were talking to a realtor about starting a business. One night, I dreamt about the realtor giving me a clean, shiny silver spoon set, and few days later he recommended us to buy a pet store. Even though my husband wanted a crab restaurant, I convinced my husband of the dream that the bunch of silver spoons probably represents that we will never go hungry and we will feed other people as well. We believed that God showed us the pet business through my dream. We have been carrying on the pet store business for over 20 years from the dream. As I prayed, God always send good Korean workers who cannot get decent jobs because of their lack of English. I believe this business is the result of God's providence. I pray that this business continues to hire those folks who are in need. I think, that is why God answered my prayer.

Insook: When I was young, I saw Jesus in my dream where he appeared on one side of the wall like a flat screened TV today. His appearance was similar to a picture we typically see in Sunday school with a white robed shepherd holding a baby lamb. But in my dream, he was not holding a baby lamb but filled the whole wall with his white robe. Jesus was a Western looking man as we typically imagine. I was in my twenties and was suffering from a severe stuffy nose. My nose smelled bad. I prayed a lot because of my nose. In the dream, Jesus told me to open my hand, gave me a handful of medicine, and told me, "eat them all." I

took the whole thing. After the dream, I was cured and had no more stuffy nose. I cannot forget that dream.

Yonghee and Insook share three common things. First, similar to Jangmi and Hanna in the first type, these women claim the divine origin of their dreams. Yonghee said that it was God who gave her the dream. She believes that her dream was part of "God's providence," and God used her dream to help people in need. For Insook, Jesus himself appeared to her dream. Second, their dreams are connected to their real life situations and therefore very much real to them. Yonghee is carrying on the pet store business for more than twenty years. Insook's stuffy nose "was cured" permanently. Third, like the women in the first group, the dreams occurred in response to their prayers. Yonghee's dream of silver spoon was God's response to her prayer for a new business. Insook "prayed a lot" for her stuffy nose.

3) Encountering God through the Visions

Okja: I went to a revival service where there was a boy next to me, who was demon possessed. When I commanded, "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, Satan be gone," I saw a cloud around the cross behind the pulpit, and only the cross was visible. I have never seen such a beautiful cloud in my life. After that, I began praying in tongue. Some people saw me strangely. While I kept praying, I saw the face of Jesus looking at me kindly, and then I shouted, "Jesus." When I opened my eyes, Jesus was gone. Afterwards, the boy began to sing praises and clapped while his mother was crying next to him with joy. That experience reinforces my belief that God is alive today in this world.

Kisook: After the morning worship service from TV, I raised my arm to give God a clap, and I saw a small picture hanging from my finger tips. On that picture, I saw two mountain which formed a letter M. On the middle of the mountain, there seemed to be a face of a man, and it felt like "Messiah" to me. Then, there were bright fiery lights emanating from the finger tips with silvery mists surrounding the mountain, which I drew on the paper quickly. The human figure between two mountain seemed to be the messiah. That was not a dream but an actual vision. It was the first of such experiences. One of my customer, who is well versed in the

Bible, told me that God has given me the Holy Spirit. If that is so, I can be more devotional because I have seen God clearly.⁴⁶

I distinguish Okja and Kisook from the second group since they claim to see the visions while they were awake. These women experienced the visions while worshipping in "a revival service" or watching a "worship service from TV." Okja connects her vision of Jesus with the cure of a demon possessed boy. Kisook interprets her vision as an anointing of "the Holy Spirit." Similar to the women in the second type, these visions have connections to the present realities by healing the boy or imparting the Holy Spirit. Through the visions, the women's "belief" or devotion was strengthened.

4) Feeling God's Presence through the Ordinary Means of Communication

Kumhee: When I pray, I can feel God's voice through my heart and realize the will of God. Afterward, I feel peaceful and notice the change in my life. Sometime ago, I was challenged to pray and fast for two days. While fasting, I did not feel hungry but felt peaceful. When I was in tune with God during the prayer and fasting, I was not hungry. I realize, if God wants me to fast, then I can do comfortably and peacefully.

Mija: I can feel God giving me a strong conviction in my heart while I pray. Just today, after the fellowship lunch, during our prayers with everyone holding hands, I felt the strong presence of God through the Holy Spirit as I suddenly became hot.

Insook: As I read the Bible, I get repeated inspirations, and this is usually the time when the Holy Spirit makes me realize things. We often get a momentary inspiration. If we get repeated inspirations through different Bible verses, then we can know that these are the inspirations from the Holy Spirit.

The women in the first three groups interact with God through the extraordinary means of communication. I added this last group to stress that the majority of the women feel God's presence in their lives through ordinary mediums. Insook had a meaningful dream which she believes was divinely given. But Insook said such dreams are rare, and more often she experiences God's presence through ordinary things. Insook "gets repeated

⁴⁶ For Kisook's drawing, see Appendix A.

inspirations" while reading the Bible. Mija "became hot" during a corporate prayer. Kumhee "never heard God's voice directly speaking to her ears" but does "feel God's voice through [her] heart." Kumhee uses two norms to discern the authenticity of the voice of God: "peaceful" mind and change "in her life." After fasting, she "felt peaceful," and she was not "hungry." Accordingly, Kumhee is convinced that the fasting was "according to God's will."

The distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary seems artificial and insignificant. In the first three types, the extraordinary means of communication pertain to women's life of worship and prayer, and are related to their real life situations. The women's lively interactions with God have positive, empowering effects on their lives by strengthening faith, healing the body and spirit, soothing upset hearts, releasing pains, or helping others in need.

Knowing God through Nature

For the women, God is actively alive in nature beyond the worship or prayer context. The women in the study learn about God through nature.

Hanna: Even the grass has the life which is from God. We make thousands of artificial flowers, but we cannot make a single grass that has a life. Just looking at the grass reminds me of the wonders of life. Even if we pluck one, another grows out of barren soil. When I see a single grass growing out of asphalt, I am awakened to the wonders of life and the mighty power of God. I realized that human beings cannot create a life, and each life belongs to God.

Eunhae: As a new born baby does not recognize the parents, we do not recognize God's presence at first. But after awhile, we see God's presence in blowing winds and in nature everywhere. God is everywhere. We just did not know it.

Hanna and Eunhae envision God as the one who is imminent in nature, loving and affirming each single life in it. They see God being present in a "single grass" and

"blowing winds." Up to this point, I have discussed the women's images of God focusing on God's transcendental dimension. A God of *shimjung* is all-knowing and all-understanding. A God of paradox and a God who punishes are all-powerful. In these images, God is viewed as the One who uses God's mighty power to take care of or to punish human beings but does not share God's power itself with human beings. Power remains within God. However, Hanna in the quote sees "the mighty power of God" being infused even in a single grass, which results in creating the "wonders of life." She learns the preciousness of a life, no matter how trivial it seems. However, reconciling this God who cherishes a single grass with the God who indiscriminately destroys thousands of lives in a flash is the task Hanna and other women must address.

The immanent aspect of God is rarely preached from the pulpits of Korean churches due to the fear of falsely preaching a pantheistic God.⁴⁷ Ignoring the immanent side of God seems to influence Korean church's general lack of concern for nature, the nonhuman world, as it was warned by Sallie McFague.⁴⁸ It is interesting to see that these women learned about the immanent God by themselves without being taught in the church. I wonder if the women's instinctual ability to learn God's immanence through nature somehow relates to what Ursula King calls women's "integral vision," which

sees all living things bound up together in one single interdependent web without any boundaries and suffused with the divine spirit.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ According to Katherine Zappone, "most theological efforts to symbolize the deity as an essential part of the nature world have been branded with the heresy of pantheism." Zappone, 31. This tendency is not different in Korean churches.

⁴⁸ McFague, 66.

⁴⁹ King, 211.

However, the women's experiential learning through nature is not without weakness.

Joohee in the following quote alerts us to be cautious when we learn through nature.

In last fall, I looked outside of windows and saw all the leaves fallen on the ground and weak branches broken off to leave only the main trunk. These weak branches died and broke off so that the main trunk can survive the harsh winter until the next spring. I realized, it needs that sacrifice. We too need the sacrifices in our lives in order to proclaim Christian love as Jesus died on the cross to demonstrate his sacrifice.

Joohee learned about Jesus' sacrifice through the fallen leaves and broken branches.

Joohee's idea about the "weak branches" which need to die in order to save the "main trunk" reminds me of the sacrifices of powerless women to sustain the established patriarchy. Learning about God through nature alone has flaws, specifically without critical thinking ability.

CHAPTER IX

A SUGGESTION FOR RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY

A Relational Pedagogy: To Empower Korean-American Women Toward Voice, Power, Agency, and Leadership.

The workshop project had a positive impact on nurturing a group of Korean women's voice, power, and agency. As a result of the research, I suggest a relational pedagogy for pastor-teachers, church educators, and lay leaders, who want to teach Korean-American women about leadership and mature faith. *Experiencing* is the core principle of the relational pedagogy. The Korean-American women need to *experience* the following seven sub-principles: a safe, free environment, conflicts, mutual impacts, the use of life experiences, teacher's relational sensitivity, multiple-forms of teaching and learning, and relational images as the contents to be reshaped and enlarged.

Relational Pedagogy: Six Process Principles

Relational Principle [1]: Experiencing an Open, Safe Environment to Share jung and han

A theoretical base of the relational pedagogy is to correlate women's voice to selfhood, power, and agency. To claim agency and leadership, Korean-American women need to *experience* the makings of their public voices in an open and safe environment. I recommend a women only, small group as the most suitable educational setting where Korean women can speak more freely. The women only group can promote Korean

women's voices not just in quantity but in quality. For instance, Hanna and Joohee did far more self-exposure in the group than one-to-one interview. It was the power of women only group that led them to share the deeper personal matters. Okja's comment, "here, everybody understands me," sums up the strength of the women only group. This experience of being understood resulted from the active *shimjung* exchanges which were possible among the women from same Korean relational culture.

To successfully run a women only group, I suggest a teacher to discuss the confidentiality issue with the group from the beginning. For instance, our small group discussed and agreed on a "whatever happens here stays here" policy. Having a female teacher can offer the environment which is less-threatening and emotionally safe. But being a teacher of relational pedagogy is not really about gender. The gender of a teacher does not guarantee the relationally successful group process. The teacher needs to have an image of teaching that upholds the value of relationship and connection, and appropriate training to actualize her relational view of teaching. If these conditions are satisfied, even male teachers can teach and lead a women only group.

A women only small group seems the most effective way to create and sustain a sense of we-ness, a sense of community in hooks' term, where Korean women's sharing of rich *jung* or love is fostered. Many Korean women live in physical and emotional isolation. The isolation outside of the family is due to their survival-oriented, immigrant life style. The isolation within the family is due to Confucian oriented relational dynamics in which the women are treated unfairly. It is an urgent necessity to provide Korean-American women with open and safe environments to share *jung* and *han* with other Korean women. In the study, such an environment produced an unexpected side

effect of natural, therapeutic environment. Therefore, the women only group functions as a place of both learning and healing.

Relational Principle [2]: Experiencing Conflicts Constructively

The Korean women need to experience and learn to deal with conflicts and negative emotions constructively. The women only group can create and sustain a community, especially with the help of underlying culture specific emotions of *jung* and *shimjung*; however, it is not immune to conflicts. The woman only group cannot and should not always be warm, cozy, and full of *jung*. During the workshop, conflicts arose most often in relation to ideological differences between the teacher and participants, for example, the unfamiliar ideas of God. It is not easy to handle conflicts constructively. Once a conflict arises, it is likely to lead to an impasse. The discussion is likely to end abruptly by the students' silence or by the teacher hurriedly moving onto another topic to avoid the conflict. For genuine learning to occur, however, conflicts are not just inevitable but necessary. Conflicts are not always the problem to be avoided but can be a great way to learn. The students need to experience conflicts in order to move toward the deeper levels of learning.

To experience conflicts constructively, I have a few advices. First, a teacher should be

present for [the students] when [they are] anxious, to recognize and accept [their] anxiety, without [the teacher] becoming too anxious or immediately trying to relieve the anxiety.¹

¹ Kegan, 126.

The teacher needs to provide the students with a "holding environment"² by holding the students "un anxiously" whenever conflicts arise.³ Fear was a critical factor that hindered the teaching and learning process during the workshop. I feared conflicts and the censorship by the church authorities. It is hard to deal with the fears when they come in disguised as in anger, silence, or indifference. However, a good teacher for the relational pedagogy should not be afraid of conflicts. Rather, she must find ways to raise good conflicts while empathizing with the students through active *shimjung* exchanges.

Relational Principle [3]: Experiencing Mutual Impacts

For Korean women, the Western feminist idea of mutuality does not seem to work. Korean women find solace in their reliance on the powerful Father God. For relational we-selves of Korean women, more urgent issue is not enhancing the mutual regard between self and other (including God as Other) but enlarging the boundaries of we-selves, beyond the family and local churches. However, the mutuality, which is understood as mutual impacts, worked positively to empower the women toward voice and agency during the workshop. For example, speaking her own thoughts and hearing the confirmation from the group can be a great empowering moment, which was the case for Okja. Accordingly, the teacher should help the students experience the mutual impacts in the group.

To promote mutual impacts, the teacher should have two basic understandings of power dynamics in the classroom. First, power differentials exist among the students,

² Kegan, 115-16.

³ Ibid., 126.

and between the teacher and students. The teacher needs to honestly evaluate the initial power differential she holds in relation to the students. Second, the power dynamic is never fixed but constantly shifting. This means that the teacher needs to maintain the keen eyes on the fluctuating power dynamics within the group. With these two basics, the teacher should actively correct and prevent the power imbalances among the group by creatively adopting multiple strategies.

The "no right answer policy" would be one of those strategies. Most Korean women in the study described their learning experience in the church as "being fed" by the pastors' sermons. This "feeding" image for teaching coincides with Freire's idea of banking education. Most Korean women are the received knowers who have been fed by their banking pastor-teachers. The "no right answer policy" can effectively dismantle the teacher's authority and empower the received knowers towards their voice and ownership. There are at least two more ways to correct and reverse the power imbalances between the students and teacher. These will be discussed in fourth and fifth relational principles.

Relational Principle [4]: Experiencing Use of Life Experience in Classroom

The fourth relational principle helps women *experience* their life stories or life experiences as the integral and legitimate part of the group/classroom learning. The students' use of life experiences in the classroom can empower them to speak and take the ownership of the class, as in the divorce debate. This is an effective way to correct the power imbalance between the students and teacher, often bringing the power reversal between two parties. Korean women have a tendency to view the pastor's use of life experiences during their sermons as digressions or, at best, as illustrations to help them to

understand theological ideas or concepts. Consequently, a change of perception in viewing life experience from a non-essential to essential matter in teaching and learning is an urgent task.

I have three advices regarding the use of students' life experiences in the classroom. The first advice is to encourage the students to use the life experiences of being and living as a woman. For instance, the teacher can encourage the women students to use their mothering experiences when they interpret the Bible and engage in theological reflections. Motherhood is what determines the Korean womanhood. The women in my study displayed intense interests in subject matters related to motherhood. Drawing on mothering experience can empower Korean women to be practical, unconventional theological thinkers.

However, the theological reflection based on life experience alone is imperfect and flawed. More often than not, experiential knowledge alone can hardly go beyond conventional thinking, as it was evident in the giving tree exercise. Accordingly, the classroom use of the students' life experience can be effective when it is combined with the use of critical knowledge. There is another reason to support such a combined use. Antonio Faundez, a Brazilian critical educator, encourages the combined use of experiential and critical knowledge because he believes in its transforming effect.

Brining these two forms of knowledge together...achieves a greater knowledge, which is the true knowledge that can translate itself into action to change reality.⁴

I observed the power of this combination during the workshop when I helped Okja to connect her experience of hating her husband to the sin of victims of others' sin

⁴ Paulo Freire and Antonio Faundez, *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*, trans. Tony Coates (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 49.

(rephrasing it as "sin from within"). As a result, Okja moved from the suppressing of her anger to an *action* in challenging her controlling husband.

The second advice is that the students' experiential knowledge can be most effectively used in combination with critical, analytical, and systemic knowledge. According to Freire, experiential knowledge can be flawed by narrowly focusing on the local, while failing to see the larger "horizon of cultural context."⁵ For instance, if I see the Korean women's general lack of social participation as the problem of local Korean churches which focus on individual salvation, then it is a big misjudgment. The issue should be seen in a bigger perspective of Korean-Americans' withdrawal from the society, as in my analysis. To avoid the danger of "focalism," experiential and local knowledge must be viewed from the "totality" of larger cultural context.⁶ I agree with Freire, the respect for the "knowledge of living experience" should not imply that "the educator must stick with the knowledge of living experience."⁷ Again, the use of experiential knowledge can be flawed. The third advice involves another weakness of experiential knowledge. Experientially based conviction can be extremely hard to challenge. The women defended God who punishes, by relying on their own experiences of punishing their children. The teacher needs to be aware this tendency in their effective responses.

⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with notes by Ana Maria Araújo Freire, trans. Robert R. Barr (New York: Continuum, 2004), 85.

⁶ Ibid., 86. According to Freire, "focalism" means to "'stifle' or 'suppress' the totality implicit in locality."

⁷ Ibid., 85.

Relational Principle [5]: Experiencing Teacher with Relational Sensitivity

The fifth principle is that the students need to experience the teacher who exerts relational sensitivity. It is hard to define relational sensitivity, but it can be described in terms of the three most important relational characteristics of the teacher. First, the teacher is expected to know the students' *shimjung* through the verbal and nonverbal *shimjung* exchanges with individual students and the group. Here, knowing the students' *shimjung* is far more than knowing their developmental readiness, needs, and necessities. Being knowledgeable about their developmental needs greatly helps. But the teacher needs to know the students' needs and necessities more holistically.

The teacher should understand the students' *shimjung* of being excited, joyful, sad, fearful, confused, angry, not knowing, or refusing to know. The teacher must understand both negative and positive *shimjungs* of the students. By understanding the students' negative *shimjung* of anger, the teacher can transform it into a powerful source for social change. Understanding the negative *shimjung* of being fearful helps the teacher move out of impasse by directly facing what is inside the student. The teacher's effort to address the student's *shimjung* of not knowing can greatly improve her teaching practice, which can transform their not knowing into the knowing or, at least, being *open* to knowing.

The teacher's ability to understand the student's *shimjung* is the most critical factor in determining the success of the first five process principles. These five are not intended to be used as do-it-yourself manual. Instead, the relational teaching should be customized to a specific group by considering the idiosyncratic makeup or needs of the group. The teacher of relational pedagogy should understand the *shimjung* of each individual student and the whole group so that she can respond accordingly. In our

workshops, I dropped many preplanned exercises and focused on just one activity or improvised new activities according to my reading of the students' *shimjung*. For instance, our discussion of confidentiality was a pre-panned activity. However, the adoption of no right answer policy was improvised after reading the students' *shimjung* of wanting the right answers from the teacher. Understanding the student's *shimjung* means that the teacher must be flexible, spontaneous, and relational.

The second characteristic of the teacher with relational sensitivity is her ability to be authentic in her interactions with the students. The best way to introduce mutual impacts to the students is for the teacher to be just herself with the students, for example, sharing her own questions and doubts with the students. During the workshop, I shared my personal stories with the students, exposing my own struggles, doubts, and vulnerabilities. This probably was a rare experience for the women to see a vulnerable teacher with struggling faith. It was rare but an empowering experience because the students learned that they are not alone in their struggles. The teacher's authenticity in the group/classroom can maximize the mutual impacts.

The third characteristic of the relational teacher, agreeing with Freire and Hess, is her ability to present her own vision and passion in a related way rather than an imposing way. The teacher should be humble in presenting her vision and passion by respecting the rights of others. From the analysis, I evaluated most of the women as the received knowers in a relatively underdeveloped phase of selfhood according to Belenky et al's. But this evaluation does not mean that I devalue the women's faith any less. Even with the limitations, I admire their enthusiasm, resilience, and perseverance in both life and faith. With her vision, the relational teacher should challenge and be challenged by the

students, trying to make their corporate journey toward knowing and loving God more successful.

Relational Principle [6]: Experiencing Various Forms of Teaching

The sixth relational principle enables the students to experience the various forms of teaching. The forms of teaching matter greatly. During the workshop, I relied primarily on the problem-posing method which was followed by the group discussion. The problem posing method resulted in lively discussions and was most powerful when the problems were situated around the students' life experiences. This combination of conversational and narrative forms of teaching greatly empowers the students' voice, agency, and ownership. I recommend this combined use for the relational teacher because it seems the best way to effectively redistribute the traditional power imbalance where the teacher is the only one to speak, as is often observed in Korean churches. In addition, upholding the problem posing or dialogic form of teaching does not necessarily mean to avoid lectures all together. Lecturing can be effective in introducing new and unfamiliar ideas. When lecturing, it is still important to base the contents in students' life experiences, as in the problem posing method.

The teacher should adopt the imaginative form of teaching. This form can bring forth passion, excitement, and a sense of community. More importantly, it often leads to creative, unconventional thoughts, which happened during our imaginative re-experiencing of the ten virgins and prodigal son stories. However, there are two cautions. First, the teacher needs to *situate* the student's imagination *in their life experiences*. The imaginative exercises of two biblical stories were successful because I situated the women's imaginations in their life situations such as the women's giving all to their

children. Without such life relevance, the imaginative form of teaching may fail to yield enthusiastic, productive responses, as was the case for the "imagine myself at the pulpit" exercise. Second, the teacher must be aware that the unconventional knowledge resulted from the imaginative form of teaching is not yet critical but has the potential.

The narrative form of teaching and learning utilizing Korean women's life experiences and stories empowers their voices and agencies. In a relational classroom, the students must be encouraged to talk their own life stories. With this basic assumption, I encourage the teacher to tell many stories of women, especially of Korean women to offset the powerful Western, male influences. Moreover, the teacher may invent new stories, which reflect Korean women's experience as well as the resulting criticism, for the classroom use. The fictional, divorce story can be one of such cases. This kind of fictional story can overcome the weakness of experiential knowledge, that is, the lack of criticalness. Well devised stories can hold both experiential and critical knowledge in themselves.⁸ The transforming effects of these stories are powerful.

Last Principle of Relational Pedagogy[7]: Experiencing Contents (Relational Images) to be Reshaped and Enlarged

Experiencing is the core principle of relational pedagogy. I have elaborated this core principle with its six sub-categories of *what* to experience. The six process principles of relational pedagogy support the Korean women's development as relational

⁸ Although it is fictional, the divorce story is still experientially based as long as it relates to women's potential life dilemma of making a judgment call for her daughter's divorce. The story contains social criticism regarding Christian practice of biblical literalism and blindly following the pastor's opinion.

and emotional development. The seventh principle focuses on the *content* of teaching.⁹ This is an important addition to the relational pedagogy in following three ways. First, according to the research finding, learning the content is as equally important as experiencing the relational process. This seventh principle is necessitated by the limitation of teaching process. Experiencing the democratic group process can empower Korean women's voice and agency only to a certain level. But the process alone does not completely change the students' dysfunctional relational experiences unless the teacher helps transform the students' dysfunctional controlling images which influence their relational experiences on a deeper level. Second, the content oriented, relational principle resonates with RCT's interest, specifically in its latest development, in the culture's controlling images that ideologically support the dysfunctional relational images. It also resonates with the feminist theologians' concern that the symbolic distortion is one major issue causing the oppression of women. Accordingly, the research examined how the ideologically informed relational images hindered the Korean women's leadership, and tried to eliminate those obstructions. The seventh principle satisfies this goal. Third, by adding the content principle that pays a close attention to the underlying working of culture through its controlling images, the relational pedagogy supports the contextual development of Korean women.

Relying on these three rationales, the teacher should acknowledge the importance of teaching the contents, especially the culture's controlling images in dynamic

⁹ By adding content-oriented principle, I reject the dichotomous view which separate the content from the process of teaching. Rather, I acknowledge that the content and process of teaching is inseparable. I have made this point when I "When the silence occurred?" in Chapter 6, discussing how specific contents of teaching interfered dysfunctionally with the group process.

interactions with individual's relational images. The Korean women need to experience their relational images and controlling images being reshaped and enlarged in a way that allows them to fully realize God-given relational potentials in their lives. The followings are three suggestions.

First, the teacher of relational pedagogy encourages Korean women to *enlarge* their images of self, church, faith, and leadership. Their problem is the narrow relational breadth. They do not have many images of self, other than the images of mother and wife, and their relational interests are often confined to the family and the local church as kind of pseudo-family institution. Korean women need to learn themselves to be more than a mother and a wife. Their images of self needs to be expanded. Most importantly, they need to know themselves as the leaders of the church and society. Korean women are the virtual leaders of the church. However, their hard work and leadership have not been well recognized because their non-traditional types of leadership in the forms of loving, serving, helping are not recognized as legitimate by others and themselves. Therefore, the image of leadership also need to be enlarged to include loving, serving, and doing little things.

The real problem in Korean-American women's leadership is found in their narrow relational interests that remain within the boundaries of their own family and local church. The research identified the Korean women's restricted images of the church and faith, which are individualistic and devoid of social dimension, as the major contributing factors to their lack of social participation. The relational teacher should inspire Korean women to enlarge their constricted images of the church and faith. They should teach that faith is more than the personal relationship with God, and the church

should not be a self-serving group but work for social transformation. For Korean women to move toward the leadership in and outside the church, it is necessary to transform the images of self, faith, church, and leadership.

Second, the relational teacher should assist Korean women to *reshape* the image of God who punishes. As long as Christianity supports the idea of permanent reward and punishment after death, the image of God who punishes cannot be completely overcome. God's permanent reward and punishment is one of the core beliefs in Christianity and discussing it is beyond the limit of this dissertation. Nevertheless, during the workshop, I was deeply troubled by the women's insensitivity to innocent sufferers such as the victims of natural disasters by connecting victims' sufferings to God's punishment. This image of God who punishes by radical sufferings must be reshaped. I tried to challenge the women's belief about radical sufferings without success. The teacher should expect the resistance from the students. However, I encourage her to keep trying.

One more doctrinal area to consider in reshaping images is the image of the cross. The research shows that Christian symbol of the cross ideologically supports the Korean women's sacrifices for others. The sacrificial life of Jesus' Christ which was manifested on the cross is Korean women's ultimate criterion to judge sinful acts, according to which selfishness or the caring for oneself over the others is judged as a sin. Apparently, there is an oppressive element in Korean women's image of the cross which needs to be reshaped. But the work of reshaping should be done with caution. The teacher must be aware that Korean women have been socialized to a life of sacrificial mother and wife according to Confucian ideology. There is the conflation of Christian and Confucian ideologies into a single force imposing sacrificial lives upon Korean women. The teacher

must be aware and deal with these two influences. Also, the teacher must recognize Korean women's sacrifices which were (and still are for some) of necessity for the survival of Korean, immigrant families and for the poor, Korean mothers without adequate resources. The teacher's work of reshaping the images of cross and sacrifice must be done gracefully while appreciating the Korean women's sacrifices for others.

However, it is a judgment call for each teacher to decide whether she needs to introduce the alternative images of God other than the Father God. I acknowledge that the Father God of Korean women cannot satisfy the Western feminists' idea of mutuality since the Father God requires obedience as the prerequisite to become his children and to enjoy the benefits of being his children. Korean women need not blindly accept the Western feminist idea of divine-human mutuality. The Western feminist ideal of mutuality should not necessarily be the ideal of Korean women because I agree with Sprague,

knowledge constructed from a privileged place in social relations of inequality is more likely to resonate with the interests and world view of the privileged than with those of the oppressed.¹⁰

The research showed that the Korean women's exclusive use of father God is more functional than not, in terms of its impacts on Korean-American women's lives and faith.

The women in the study chose the security and benefits of being obedient daughters over the mutuality with God. Repeatedly marginalized by gender, race, and class, Korean-American women need the God of paradox or the living God, who intervenes in the lives of his children with mighty power to ensure his children's survival. Korean women do not need a God who refrains from exercising God's power out of the

¹⁰ Sprague, 56.

respect for the mutual status of human beings. The multifaceted Father God who is also the God of paradox, the God of *Shimjung*, and the living God, has contributed to the survival and flourishing of Korean women living in harsh and lonely immigrant lives in America. Despite the differences in power and gender, and the fearful image of God who punishes, Korean women feel intimate toward the Father God since the image of fearful God is offset by the other positive images of God, God of *shimjung*, God of paradox, and living God. Besides, Korean women's self-image as a daughter of God which connotes God's favoritism has an effect to offset the fearful image of God who punishes.

While acknowledging its positive impacts on Korean-American women's lives, I am still concerned about the fact that most of the women in the workshop was not able to imagine God as any other than the father. Perhaps, this inability to imagine God differently is somehow related to the women's resignation in admitting themselves as the leaders of the church. While appreciating its contribution to the survival of Korean women, the teachers need to have watchful eyes on the exclusive use of image of the Father God that could work dysfunctionally by holding women in the place of status quo. Naming God differently is one of the dividing issues for Korean-churches in America. I suggest that the teachers of relational pedagogy weigh the benefits and losses of introducing new images of God for Korean women in specific life circumstances. Dealing with God images, the teacher should question the working of culture's controlling images such as the Father God, while expecting God help us to discern the grace-filled ways to free the women from those controlling images. The teaching is a political and Grace-seeking enterprise.

Not to Blame the Victims: In Need of Socio-Structural Changes

I examined the women leadership as an issue of *internalized* oppression in the form of controlling images of culture and Christianity. In the study, the oppressions that reside *outside* of women, such as socio-structural oppressions, were not addressed. Further, the research was done with a small group of Korean women within the local church. However, according to Herr and Anderson, the researchers in action research must study "the local in terms of macro political forces and social structural constraints."¹¹ Ignoring the analysis of "macro-level forces" in action research, according to Herr and Anderson, is

to politicize one's research through blaming the victim by individualizing or psychologizing a problem whose causes are ultimately social and/or economic. In order to understand the local, one must understand how the local came to be the way it is. This will necessarily take the action researcher into an analysis that is social, historical, and economic.¹²

Not to blame the victims, the Korean women's leadership issue must be seen in a larger socio-political context beyond SKPC, which includes Korean-American Presbyterian churches, Korean churches, and Korean-American immigrant community interacting with mainstream society. The narrowness of Korean women's faith should not be blamed as their own failures. The women have been fed and nurtured mostly through the sermons of pastors who themselves are trained in denominational theologies. It should not be ignored that Korean American immigrant society itself has been marginalized from mainstream society. The Korean-American women's leadership problem is symptomatic

¹¹ Herr and Anderson, 65.

¹² Ibid., 68.

of such corporate problems of Korean-American immigrant society or Korean-American churches.

The workshop succeeded in empowering the women toward more voice, power, and agency. However, the transforming of an institution from the bottom by altering lay women's relational experiences and relational images has its limit. The successful transformation through the workshops was often undermined and nullified by the teachings from the pulpit. A broader structural change is required for such small projects to empower lay women. Broader institutional changes in local, denomination, socio-cultural settings must accompany the changes in local churches to solve the Korean-American women's leadership problem. Perhaps, one place to begin, on a denominational level, is to train and produce more female pastors. Female pastors can influence church policies. Female pastors can teach about women leadership by their own examples. Watching another woman pastor preaching from the pulpit empowers lay women toward more public leadership. I have the first hand knowledge in the power of preaching from the pulpit. After completing my first official sermon at SKPC, a woman said to me,

you are a woman, like one of us. But I was completely engrossed in your words while you were preaching.

I suggest the Korean Presbyterian churches to produce more female pastors. Female pastors should also be given opportunities to preach to adult congregation on a regular basis, not being confined to children ministry, youth ministry, or visitation ministry. The pain of the woman in a black suit should not be repeated.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part I : General Questions

Name : Age :

Education in Korea : High school or below / College or above

Living duration in America : Since when ? How many years ?

Languages : Korean only / English only / Bilingual

Types of TV viewing : Korean TV only / American TV only / Both

American friend : Yes or No

Regular contact with American : Yes or No

Which area do you live?

Career or type of work :

Marital status : Children? Their gender and age?

How long have you been attending this church? Years:

Have you attended other churches? Other denominations? Where and for how long? Is denomination and/or Presbyterian important to you? If so, explain.

What is your current position or responsibilities in the church?

Name one favorite hymn or gospel song:

Part II : Relationship Questions**1. Who Am I?**

What other people say about me?

Which relationship was the most important during your younger years?

Which relationship is the most important to you now?

Who needed you the most from past and present?

Who could you influence the most in the future?

Have you thought that you have a leadership in the church?

What does this church mean to you?

What is your involvement in Korean-American society? American society?

2. Who is God to you?

How do you see God?

How does God sees you?

How do you communicate with God?

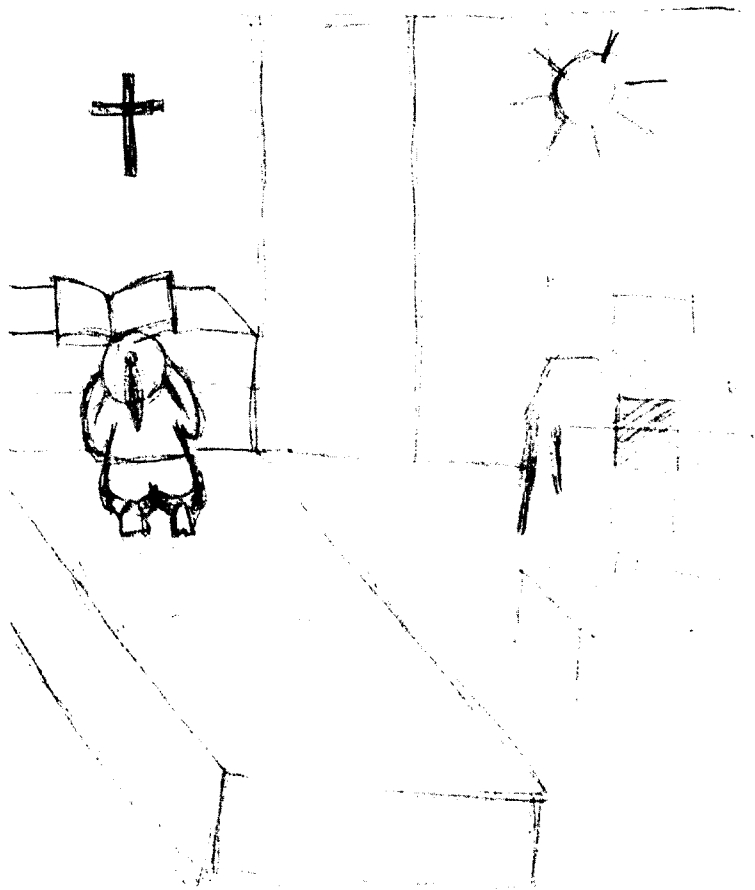
How can you discern and know God's will?

*** Two root questions in Part II were asked and dependent on their answers, other follow up questions were asked.

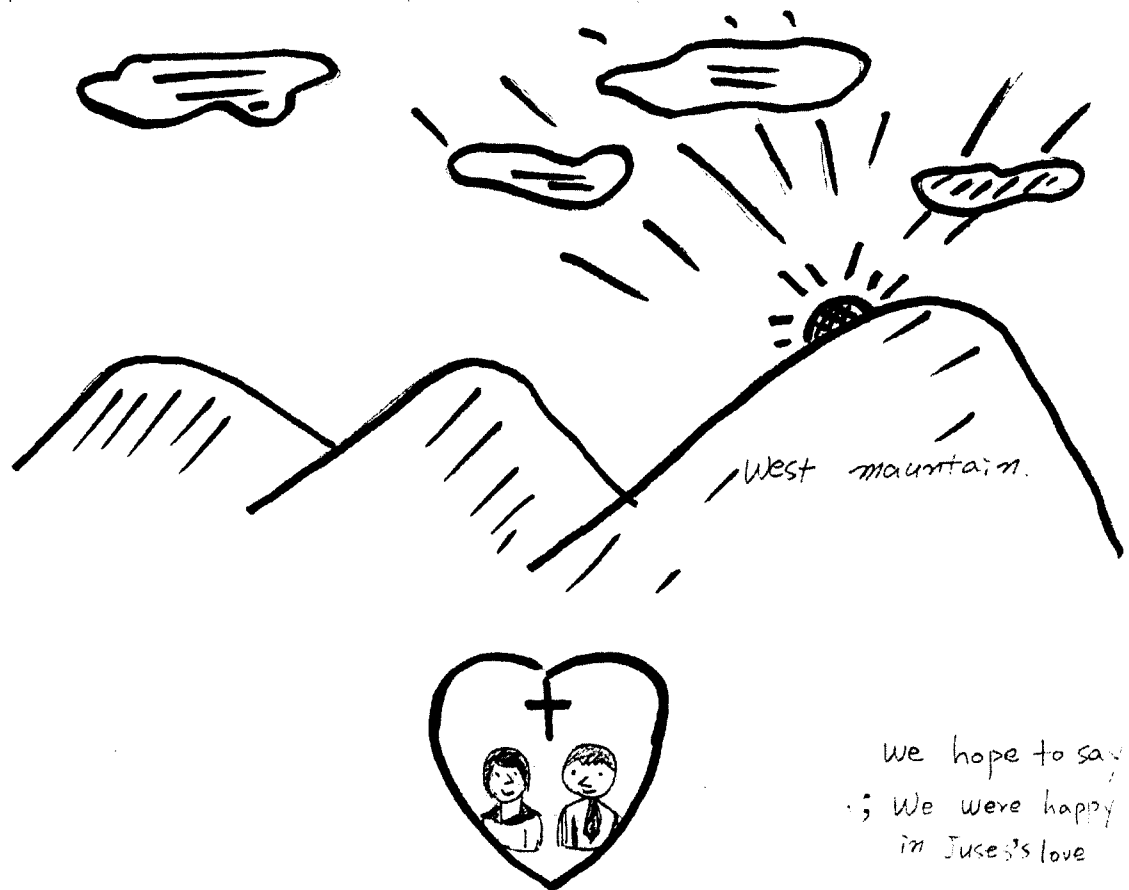
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANTS' WORKS

Minjoo's Faith-Drawing



Hanna's Faith Drawing



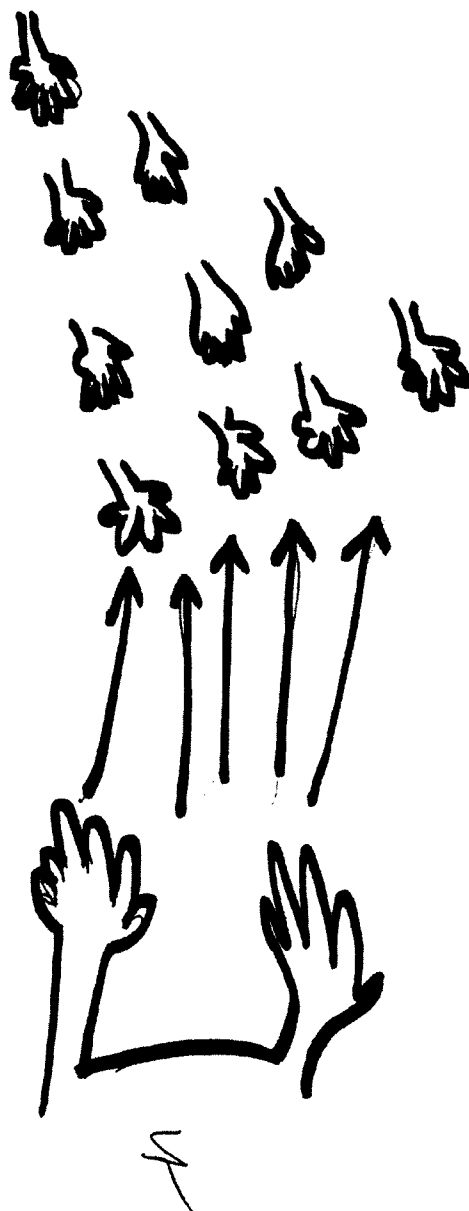
"We hope to say; we were happy in Jesus' love."

Soonhee's Faith Drawing

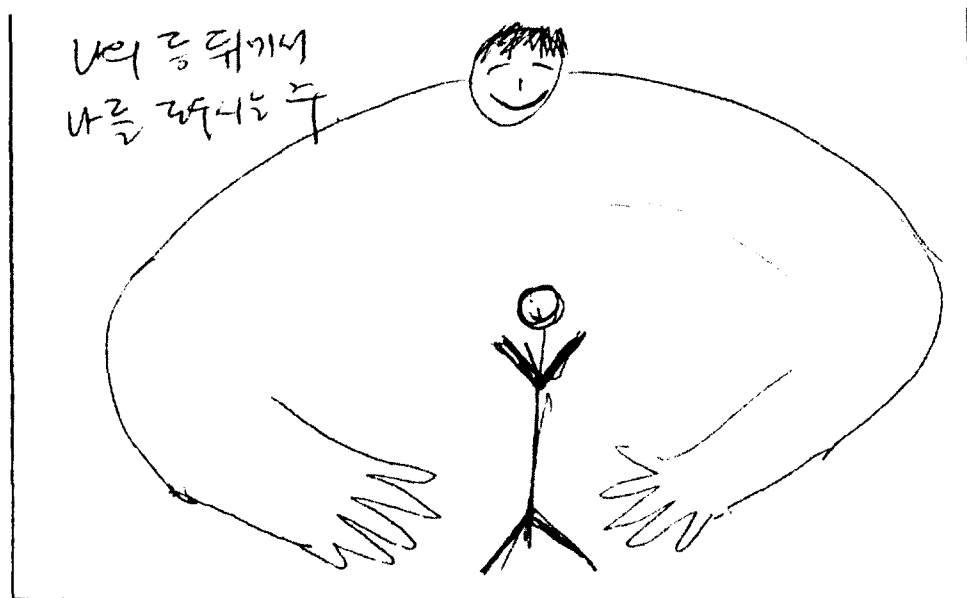


"Far left picture is the way I looked before accepting Jesus Christ. Back then, I was self-centered, full of worldly greed, arrogance, and desire for worldly pleasures. All of these snared me into a destruction and became the rod that punished me. The center picture is me repenting tearfully before the cross. It is the scene where I was in tear realizing how sinful I am after meeting Jesus. Far right picture shows my current state where I fly back and forth between Korea and America living a Christ centered life. I wanted to draw a scene of me in the Bible study but could not."

Rose's Faith Drawing



Minjoo's God Image Drawing



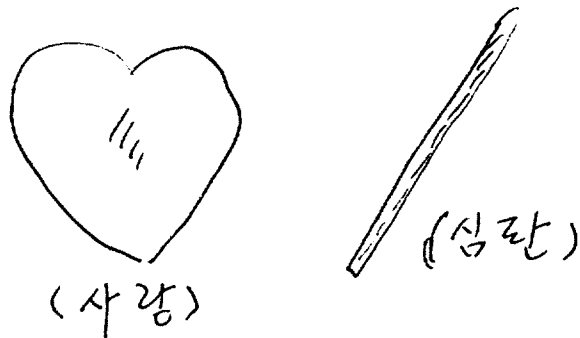
"God is the one who supports me from behind"

Insook's God Image Drawing



"God embraces and welcomes all in God's arms"

Hanna's God Image Drawing

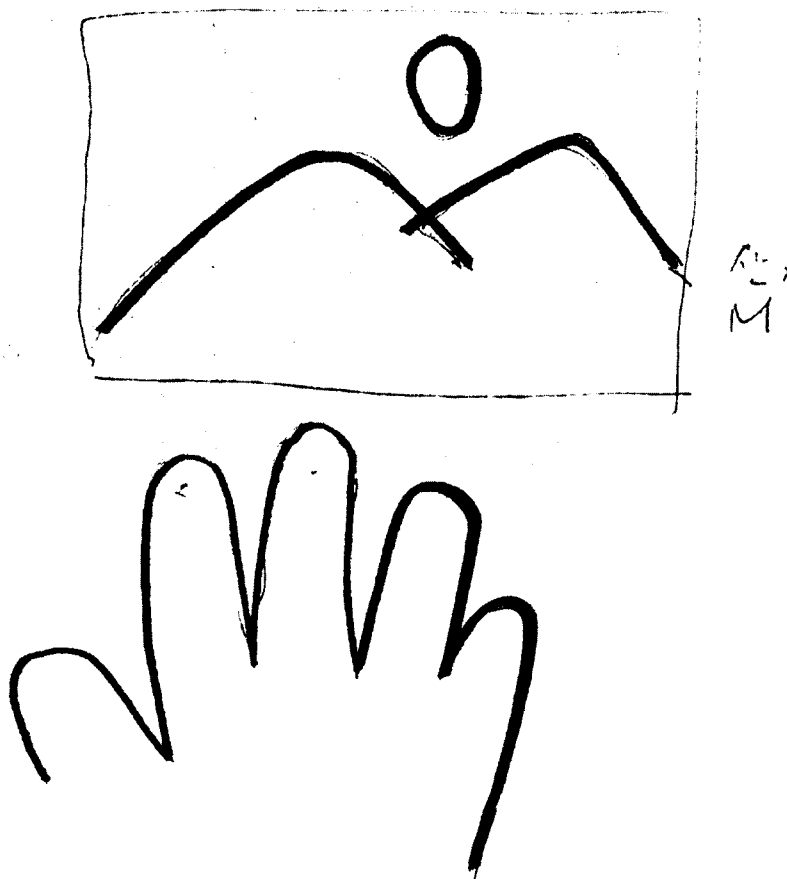


母은 우리를 창조하셨기에 근본적으로 사랑
 하시지만 우상 숭배나 죄악의 길로 갈때
 심판을 하신다.

"Love" versus "punishment"

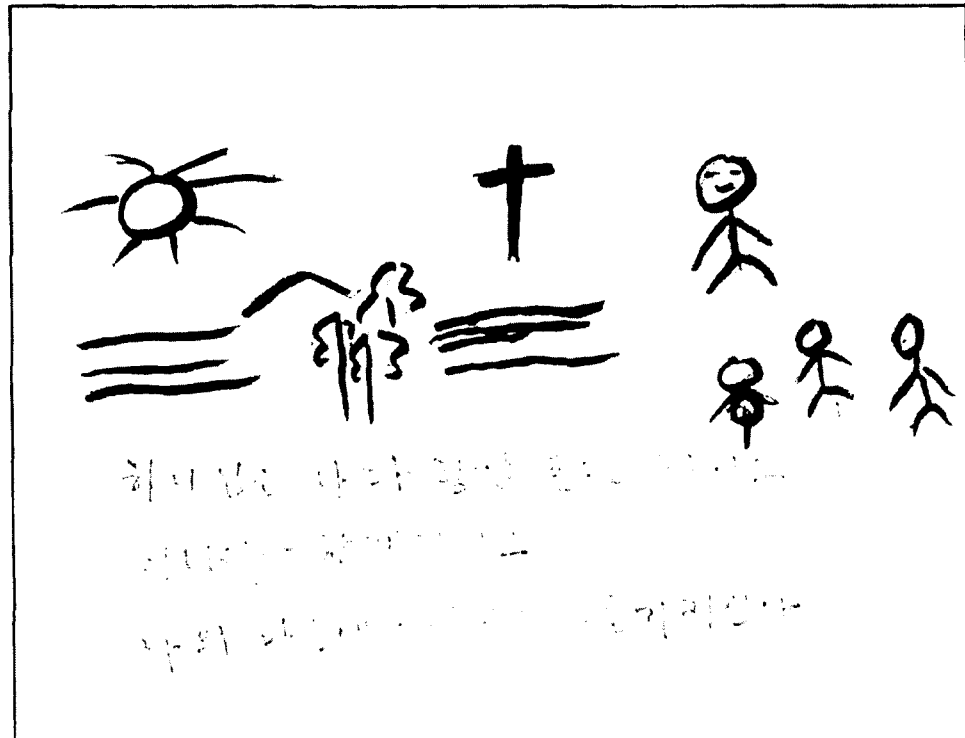
"God loves us because God created us, but God will punish us when we go astray toward the path of sinners."

Kisook's Drawing



"After the morning worship service from TV, I raised my arm to give God a clap, and I saw a small picture hanging from my finger tips. On that picture, I saw two mountain which formed a letter M. On the middle of the mountain, there seemed to be a face of a man, and it felt like "Messiah" to me. Then, there were bright fiery lights emanating from the finger tips with silvery mists surrounding the mountain, which I drew on the paper quickly. The human figure between two mountain seemed to be the messiah. That was not a dream but an actual vision. It was the first of such experience. One of my customer, who is well versed in the Bible, told me that God has given me the Holy Spirit. If that is so, I can be more devotional because I have seen God clearly."

Okja's God Image Drawing



"God walks with me always
 God is with me wherever I go
 God dwells within me, protecting me."

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